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Founder
S. S. Shashi

Chief Editor
Dharam Vir

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Journal of National Development

Aims and Scope

The Journal of National Development (JND) is an interdisciplinary bi-annual peer reviewed & refereed international journal committed to the ideals of a 'world community' and 'universal brotherhood'. The Journal is a joint effort of like-minded scholars in the field of social research. Its specific aims are to identify, to understand and to help the process of nation-building within the framework of a 'world community' and enhance research across the social sciences (Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, Psychology, History, Geography, Education, Economics, Law, Communication, Linguistics) and related disciplines like all streams of Home Science, Management, Computer Science, Commerce as well as others like Food Technology, Agricultural Technology, Information Technology, Environmental Science, Dairy Science etc. having social focus/implications. It focuses on issues that are global and on local problems and policies that have international implications. By providing a forum for discussion on important issues with a global perspective, the *JND* is a part of unfolding world wide struggle for establishing a just and peaceful world order. Thus, the *JND* becomes a point of confluence for the rivulets from various disciplines to form a mighty mainstream gushing towards the formulation and propagation of a humanistic world- view.

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Importance of Education and Issues of Implementation in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) : The Case Study of Nepal

*Shahadave Shrestha**

This article endeavors to contribute to the growing body of scholarship on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) linkages by making SDG 4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” as its central focus. This article discusses the intricate interconnections between SDG 4 and other Goals proving importance of education for SDGs. Then, it explores the issues that a developing country like Nepal will face in achieving this important goal. This paper is based on secondary data, related reports and literature. The research paper tried to analyze factors that place hurdles in Nepal to achieve SDG no. 4. Having large numbers of goals, confusing macro targets, limitation related to financial resources, unsatisfactory performance in retaining students, and substandard quality of education are all seen as major factors that will impede the achievement of goal of education.

[**Keywords** : Sustainable Development Goals, Education, Nepal, Developing countries]

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1. Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda present a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of taking worldwide actions and start putting measures in place to reach the targets posed by the United Nations (UN). The SDGs are not perfect, but they can function as a catalyst for real change. They show major development challenges for humanity. The world might not be able to achieve all the goals and targets, but it will certainly veer humanity towards path of progress to a point that we did not expect a few years ago.

Among 17 sustainable development goals, Goal no. 4 which states “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” is one of the most important goals. There is wide body of literature that presents and supports education as vital and most important factor for sustainable development. Realizing its importance UN started the ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) program long before SDGs itself. The field of education has established linkage with all the other remaining goals and will play significant role in achieving other goals.

There is no doubt as to the importance of this goal. However, understanding the importance of it and achieving the goal are different matter. Especially, developing countries such as Nepal will have to face many issues in achieving this goal. For Nepal, it will not be easier to achieve targets set by SDGs.

This article endeavors to contribute to the growing body of scholarship on SDG linkages by placing SDG4 at the center and analyze the issues faced by Nepal to achieve it.

2. SDG 4 : Ensure Inclusive and Quality Education for All and Promote Lifelong Learning

The SDG framework has a specific goal on Education (SDG4 - Ensure Inclusive and Quality Education for All and Promote Lifelong Learning) that involves 7 targets and 3 means of implementations (MOI) as shown in the figure 1.

Goal for education has tried to cover very broad area that ranges from pre-primary education to higher education. Also it has included the issues of gender equality and equal access in education.

It has given emphasis on quality education and designed 3 means of implementation which includes training teachers, scholarships and safe learning environment.

Figure-1. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) no. 4



Source : UNESCO, 2018

3. Methodology

This paper uses library research for clarifying the significance of the education (goal 4) in order to achieve the SDGs. Systematic efforts to connect SDG4 and other SDGs is very vital to achieve the widest possible range of co-benefits. A growing number of literature suggest that effort to connect the SDGs are more effective in order to achieve SDGs as a whole.

This paper examines SDGs from perspective of education and relies mainly on selection of reports from international organizations and scholarly papers. First, it examines the reports addressing the connections of education with other goals. It collects relevant evidence from recent policy documents published by UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and a few other international agencies. Then this research paper focuses education sector of Nepal and issues related in achieving the SDGs.

4. Importance of Education

SDG describes major development challenges for humanity and aims to secure a sustainable, peaceful, prosperous, and equitable life on earth for everyone. The changes that are occurring in our planet

show that relying on government alone or any other single organization is not the right decision. Global citizens' engagement is needed to make the right decisions. For that, we need the involvement of all actors (government, business, international organizations etc.), and citizens need to be educated, informed and committed in order to make the right decisions. Achieving the SDGs will not be plausible unless there is active participation of every citizen. For every citizen to be able to actively participate in the implementation of the SDGs, a set of skills, attitudes and values needs to be fostered.

The SDGs success will pulldown barriers to sustainable development such as environmental degradation, inequality, and unsustainable consumption patterns. In order to achieve sustainable development, profound transformation of behavior and understanding will be required. To engage with sustainability-related issues as described in the SDGs and create a sustainable world, individuals must become participant of change-makers. People require the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to contribute to sustainable development (UNESCO, 2017). Education can help to attain these factors. Education, therefore, is crucial for the achievement of sustainable development.

5. Linkage between SDG 4 and other SDGs

Education serves as a means of implementation that cuts across all of the SDGs and will support the overall achievement of the post-2015 development agenda.

No country can achieve sustainable economic development without substantial investment in education (Ozturk, 2008). Education is recognized as having one of the highest long-term returns on investment of all development goals (Didham and Ofei-Manu, 2019).

According to EFA global monitoring report 2011, 12% reduction in global poverty could be achieved merely by insuring that all children in low-income countries leave school with basic reading skills - this is the equivalent of lifting 171 million people out of poverty (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011: 8). The OECD estimated that by achieving basic education and basic skill levels for all youth by 2030, lower and middle income countries could tap a 28% higher GDP per year over the next 80 years (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2015).

At an individual level, each additional year of schooling strengthens individual earning potential by an average of 10% (Polachek, 2008). According to Lochner, education has a more positive influence on health than income or employment (2010). Other reports suggest that attainment of primary education leads to reduction in child mortality rates up to 50%, and educated mothers are generally more responsive to children's health needs (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2011; Mattos, MacKinnon, & Boorse, 2012). Report published by Arabella shows strong links between increased education and improvements in civic participation and political stability (2006).

A report by the International Council for Science and International Social Science Council, which examined SDGs from a scientific perspective (ICSU and ISSC, 2015) linked education with all the other goals of SDGs. The following table summarizes the links.

Table-1 : Link of SDG 4 to other Goals

Goal	Linkage	Target
1	Education is critical for lifting people out of poverty	1.1,1.4,1.5
2	Education plays a key role in helping people move towards more sustainable farming methods, and understanding nutrition.	2.3,2.4
3	Education can make critical difference to a range of health issues, including early mortality, reproductive health, spread of disease, healthy lifestyle and well-being.	3.2, 3.7, 3.c
5	Education for women and girls is particularly important to achieve basic literacy, improve participative skills and abilities, and improve life chances.	5.5, 5.a , 5.b
6	Education and training increases skills and capacity to use natural resources more sustainably and can promote hygiene.	6.2 , 6.b
7	Educational programs, particularly in non-formal and informal sectors can promote better energy conservation and uptake of renewables.	7.2
8	There is a direct link between such areas as economic vitality, entrepreneurship, job market skills and levels of education.	8.3, 8.4, 8.6
9	Education is necessary to develop the skills required to build more resilient infrastructures and more sustainable industrialization	9.4, 9.5, 9.c

10	Where equally accessible, education makes a proven differences to social and economic inequality	10.2, 10.3
11	Education can give people the skills to be participants in shaping and maintaining more sustainable cities, and achieve resilience in disaster situations	11.5, 11.7, 11.b
12	Education can make a critical difference both to production patterns (eg. With regards to the circular economy) and to consumer understanding of more sustainably produced goods and prevention of waste	12.3, 12.8
13	Education is key to mass understanding of the impacts of climate change and to adaptation and mitigation, particularly at the local level.	13.1, 13.3, 13.b
14	Education is important to developing awareness of the marine environment and building proactive consensus regarding wise and sustainable use.	14.1, 14.4, 14.a
15	Education and training increases skills and capacity to underpin sustainable livelihoods and conserve natural resources and bio diversity particularly in threatened environments.	15.2, 15.3, 15.c
16	Social learning is vital to facilitate and ensure participative, inclusive and just societies as well as social coherence.	16.7, 16.10
17	Life- long learning builds capacity to understand and promote sustainable development policies and practices.	17.9, 17. 17

Source : ICSU and ISSC, 2015

6. Case of Nepal

Nepal is a least developed country (LDC) characterized by slow economic growth and low level of human development. In 2018, Nepal remained one of the least developed countries in Asia and ranked 149th out of 188 countries in the UN Human Development Index (UNDP, 2018). According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), about 25 percent of the population existed on less than USD \$1 per day in 2010/11(2019).

Even though Nepal has lot to progress in various sectors, it did made significant improvement in achieving some of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a pre-cursor of the SDGs, despite the political instability at the time. Many targets pertaining to poverty, health, women's empowerment and education were achieved.

7. Issues of implementation in Nepal.

The Importance of SDG 4 is apparent to all the countries developed and/or developing alike. But the implementation and achievement of the goals and targets is a challenge for LDC like Nepal. In this part of the paper, researcher will analyze issues that will make it difficult for Nepal to achieve the SDG4.

Nepal has signed SDG declaration and have made its own policies to work on SDGs. Nepal was ranked 102 in SDG Index for 2018 (Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2018). Especially in education sector, even though Nepal has made good progress in primary education with the Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) now standing at 96.2 percent and the literacy rate of 15-24 year olds at 88.6 percent (National Planning Commission, 2017), it still faces many different issues which will make it very hard for Nepal to achieve targets set by SDGs. These issues are analyzed in detail below:

7.1 Unrealistic Targets

There have been concerns that some of the targets of SDG 4 are too ambitious while others are unrealistic. For example, one of the targets of SDG 4, Target 4.1 is deemed unrealistic to meet in the proposed timeframe due to the addition of achieving free, universal secondary education by 2030, when the past fifteen years of effort on MDG 2 and EFA (education for all) goal 2 to achieve free, universal primary education stalled half way through this period (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2015). There are still 58 million children today who do not receive primary education (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2015). Also, target 4.1 asks for completion of secondary education and free provision. But target 4.2 only requires state agencies to ensure pre-primary education and there is no mention of making it free and compulsory.

Target of MDG2 was achieving universal primary education. The SDG4 has taken a further step by expanding this vision from achieving primary education to promoting lifelong learning opportunities and universal secondary education. A question that arises how does a country commit to free secondary education, if it is struggling to meet primary education goals?

These kind of ambitious targets does not only obstruct the single target but create hindrances in achieving other targets. A set of

ambitious and unrealistic targets may hinder developing countries in developing effective implementation strategies. It will also lead to a situation where resources become too divided to achieve meaningful progress in any single target (The EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2015.).

This situation is applicable to Nepal also.

7.2 Multiple Goals

There are 17 goals in SDGs. LDCs like Nepal always face financial resource constraint. So having more and ambitious goals to attain, hinders to achieve all goals. Nepal has to work on various sustainable development goals including education. Now it will have to divide its already scanty financial resource to meet many different and ambitious goals namely poverty reduction programs, infrastructures, health, and education etc. Relying on mobilizing government revenue alongside existing levels of aid is not going to be enough.

According to Hoy (2016), there is huge gap between required and available financial resources for 3 goals (poverty, health, and education) in LCDs. If other goals are added to it, this gap will increase even further.

Report published jointly by Bertelsmann Stiftung, a German social responsibility foundation and sustainable development solutions network(SDSN) in 2018 states that Nepal still needs to work a lot to meet targets of ending hunger (Goal 2), promoting good health and wellbeing (Goal 3), ensuring access to affordable and clean energy (Goal 7), and promoting decent work and economic growth (Goal 8). In addition, Nepal also needs to put in lots of effort to build and promote sustainable industry and foster innovation (Goal 9), create sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11), and promote peace, justice and strong institutions (Goal 16).

So, having numbers of larger and ambitious goals will hinder the achievement of those goals. It is true, especially to Nepal which is low income country.

7.3 Finance

It is commonly agreed that governments, through public expenditure, hold the key mechanism and main responsibility for long-term, sustainable financing of education.

Effective financing is critical in achieving quality education that is inclusive and equitable, provides lifelong learning, and also strengthens sustainable development. Mobilizing all financial streams “domestic public, domestic private, international public, international private and blended finance” and coordinating them for greatest impact is critical (United Nations, 2014).

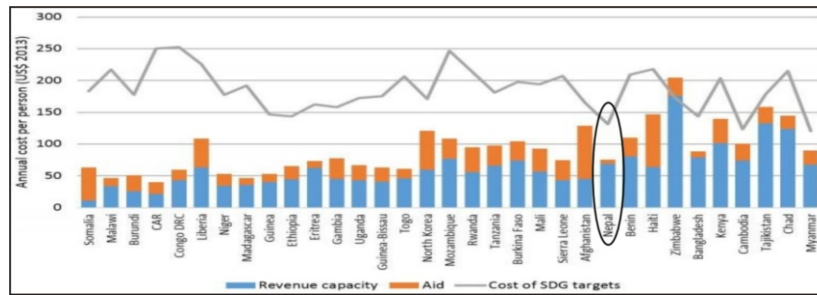
In Nepal, where large investments are still required for overall infrastructure improvements in education systems, international aid and financing remains crucial. Report published by national planning commission states that the amount of official development aid (ODA) inflow will have to double from existing levels in order to get sufficient fund to work on SDGs (2015). Nepal needs large amounts of ODA to bridge the funding gaps for SDG implementation. Problem with ODA is there is no guarantee that pledged country will certainly provide it. During the MDG period many countries did not disburse the ODA they had pledged. There are no guarantees of increased ODA for implementing the SDGs either. The level of disbursement declined from 85.7 percent of commitments in 1999/00 to only 55.4 percent in 2014/15 (National Planning Commission, 2017). Current ODA is insufficient to meet the expenditure needed for Nepal to achieve the goals. Receiving enough ODA itself is major challenge.

Also, G20 countries agreed in 2002 to provide 0.7% of the Gross National Income (GNI) for ODA. But as of 2016, it is still less than 0.4 %. So there is gap of 2.9 trillion USD between target and actually provided ODA (MacFeely, 2019).

Another report states that the share of aid to education that actually reaches the recipient countries is significantly lower than in other sectors. Of the total direct aid to education, only 68% of it reaches recipient countries (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015: 273).

In 2014, an UN Intergovernmental Committee (UNIC) of experts estimated that total cost of the SDGs will be trillions of dollars a year. The total cost for the SDGs targets related to poverty, health and education is estimated to be USD 148 billion a year in low income countries alone (Hoy, 2016). The gap between the public finance available vs cost of key targets is astonishingly big in case of LCDs. The chart below shows the gap between two:

Chart 1 Gap between required and available financial resource for SDGs (education, health and poverty) in LCDs.



Source : Hoy, C. (2016)

From the chart above big gap between cost of SDG targets and revenue and aid in Nepal is clear.

Also in 2006, the High Level Group on Education for All (EFA) recommended that governmental spending between 4-6% of gross national product (GNP) and 15-20% of public expenditure should be allocated to education. These benchmarks were then included in the Muscat Agreement on Global Education for All Meeting in May 2014 (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015: 241). However, for domestic spending on education, it is projected that there would still be a shortfall of USD 22 billion annually over the next fifteen years to achieve the basic education targets by 2030 (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015 : 296).

All these issues show financial resource that Nepal has is not enough for achieving targets. In addition to these issues, 2015 earthquake brought new and unexpected challenges. It brought new challenges, as large reconstruction and recovery needs because of infrastructure damage (National Planning Commission, 2017). So financial constraint will be big factor that may create gap between the target and actual achievement at the end. This shows the financial pressure that Nepal will face in order to meet the target.

7.4 Dropouts and out of School

Another issue that Nepal faces is the low transition rate from primary to lower secondary and from lower to higher secondary level. High dropout rates show that many children do not enroll in secondary education. Despite achieving almost universal enrollment, retention of students in the primary and secondary levels is still a serious problem in Nepal. Only 76.8 percent of pupils that enroll in elementary education survived until the last grade of

elementary education in 2015 (Dilas, Cui and Trines, 2018). Unless this challenge is not addressed, dropout rate will be an issue which definitely will create obstacle in reaching the target of secondary as well as primary education for all. Various reports and research shows that large number of students drop out of school for various reasons in Nepal. Financial problem, children with special needs, language of instruction are main reasons for the higher dropout rate.

High indirect cost of schooling is one of the reasons of drop out. Though the current constitution of Nepal guarantees every citizen the right to “free education up to the secondary level from the state,” (Constitution of Nepal, 2015), many parents are still required to pay school fees and pay for items, such as books or uniforms. According to Dilas, Cui and Trines (2018), half or even more of all expenditures on secondary education in Nepal were still borne by private households in 2015.

Children with special needs dropout rate is also higher. Bringing and retaining children with disabilities and ensuring they are able to complete at least the secondary level of education through proper incentives will be a big challenge for the government of Nepal. Among the total students enrolling in primary education, 1.1 percent are different able students (Devkota and Bagale, 2015). But still government has no such pertinent mechanism that will address needs and problems of children with special needs. Policies and programs are neither sufficient nor efficient for providing the required optimal learning environment to these children (Devkota and Bagale, 2015). Government has provided scholarships to the needed children. But the efficiency of distribution, is still a problem (Department of Education, 2018).

Another reason is language of instruction. Nepal is multi lingual society. However, the language used for teaching is mainly the Nepali language. Curtis (2009) claims that indigenous children are often deprived of schooling in their mother tongue and teaching curriculum ignores their traditional knowledge, which means “school curriculum is often far removed from their cultural practice”. According to Serpell (1993), the inconsistencies take place between the goals of the curriculum and social groups when a designed school curriculum alienates students from their culture. This becomes a reason for students to quit school.

But there are many challenges to implement multilingual education in all schools in Nepal. For example, lack of teaching

material in multiple languages, the lack of well-trained multilingual teachers, and lack of written forms of many languages etc. are few reasons (Bhandari, 2015).

Another pressing issue that haunts education sector in Nepal is “out of school children”. The causes of being out of school, especially for girls, are many. Marginalized communities face barriers such as poverty, norms, lack of awareness in parents, and child marriage. Apart from that migration, child labor, and civil strife are other major barriers (UNESCO, 2016).

According to UNICEF (2008), a big proportion of the primary school age out-of-school children, 6.4 per cent, are expected to never enter school. At the lower secondary level, 5.7 per cent of children are out of school, out of whom 44.3 per cent are expected to never enter school. Girls are especially likely to be out of school at the lower secondary school age. It is more likely that they will never enter school (UNICEF, 2008).

Even after making progress in the gross enrollment ratio (GER), in primary education, Nepal hasn't been able to fix this issue of dropouts. This is certainly one big barrier that Nepal will find hard to overcome. These issues which are intertwined with each other will create intricate problems in achieving the SDG 4.

7.5 Quality of Education

SDGs do not encompass only primary education but quality education as well. In the case of Nepal, this is still a problem. Bhandari (2015) states many different issues that are rampant in the education sector of Nepal. One of these issues is the lack of policy about the education for the society with multi-culture and multi-ethnicity. Another is prioritizing memorization of the textbook (rote learning). All these issues hinder to act smoothly in order to meet goal of quality education. UNESCO (2008) reported for Nepal that child-centered education is not included in teacher training programs. It focuses on acquisition of knowledge, its memorization and reproduction. It does not encourage the kind of learning that young people need for their future. Education system of Nepal still cannot get rid of rote-learning, teacher-centered, exam-oriented practices. Though government has policy of training teachers for more advanced ways of teaching, results are still to show. The pedagogical approach of teachers in schools affects the quality of

education. Not only that, supplementary, age-appropriate reading material in order for children to develop the reading habits are mostly unavailable in Nepal (Ministry of Education, 2016; 12).

In the case of higher secondary level education, number of subject teachers are also not adequate in many schools as the government provides financial support only for two subject teachers for grades 11 and 12 per school. In addition, there are quality issues in the secondary level textbooks and the timely distribution of textbooks to students is still a major concern (Ministry of Education, 2016; 25).

In Nepal's case many teachers, who are teaching, especially, science, math and English in community schools, need to strengthen their subject knowledge. Very few schools have teachers who can effectively teach in English (Ministry of Education, 2016; 12).

7.6 Issue of Data

Adding to all the other hurdle, unavailability of data is another hurdle that can obstruct the flow of the improvement towards achievement. Lack of data makes it harder to measure achievement made towards SDGs. To know the stage of accomplishment, proper data is required. It's not just quantity of data. Quality of data is more important. Disaggregated data provides a good basis to understand progress towards goals that are critical. But, first, it must be collected and disaggregated. This is of paramount importance to ensure that the vulnerable people are not being left behind.

According to SDG knowledge platform (2017), weak database and lack of availability of disaggregated data by sex, age, social groups, disability status, geography, income, and sub-national level is one of the challenges for Nepal. National Planning Commission (2017; iv) also highlighted that the monitoring of the outcome and impact level indicators is hampered by the lack of disaggregated information. For collected data, it may be inaccurate if census collectors or surveyors are poorly-trained.

Inaccuracy of data will make it harder for making plans and policies that will address the real issue directly. Already, Nepal is grappling with multiple issues and problems. Inadequate data will only make the process of making policies and activating mechanism to address the goal no. 4 slower. Though it may seem like not so important but availability of data is serious challenge in the SDGs and this is most serious for developing countries like Nepal.

8. Conclusion

Education's role in achieving SDG is without doubt very important. It is linked to all the other remaining goals. So achieving goal of education is very important. However, in the context of the least developed countries, it poses challenge in implementation. LDC like Nepal faces many different issues on the way to achieving the SDGs which are interlinked, indivisible, and ambitious. Ambitious macro targets, weak financial resources, pertinent social issues, and weak database will be huge hurdle for Nepal to achieve the goal of education by the given time frame. The scale of these challenges that Nepal confronts for the achievement of the goal of education makes it more difficult for Nepal.

Ambitious and unrealistic targets and multiple goals are huge and almost impossible task for Nepal to complete within given time frame. When these goals and targets are paired with financial constraint, challenge becomes even bigger for Nepal. And these issues are interrelated. These ambitious goals require lots of financial resources. For LDC like Nepal, there is always a gap between required financial resource and availability of it. Whatever resources Nepal has, will have to be divided for different goals. This will make it very difficult for Nepal to finance any single goal, adequately. So, goal of Education will be equally affected by lack of finance.

Adding to these issues, existing problems of high dropout rate and out of school students due to various social and financial factor, make it in even bigger challenge in achieving the goal of education. Also, there is issue of quality education. Quality education is very much important target of SDG no. 4. However, education of Nepal is plagued with various problems that prevents it from increasing its quality. Rote learning, lack of education policy to address the need of multi-cultural and multi ethnic society, lack of supplementary materials and lack of well-trained teachers makes attaining quality education difficult.

Finally, unavailability of disaggregated data and inaccuracy of available one makes it hard to measure the real achievement made.

All the challenges discussed in this paper are hurdles that are needed to be dealt with. It demands extraordinary commitment from every stakeholder at various level.

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Awareness and Self Reported Utilization Pattern of Community Palliative Care Units in a Rural Area in Central Kerala

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Palliative care is a specialty of health care that deals with not only the attitude and values of care, but caters to the patient dealing with chronic, debilitating, life-threatening illness from diagnosis till death. Kerala has been the pioneer for offering excellent palliative care in our country supported by government policy that ropes provision of palliative care through the public health system. Home-based palliative care is care provided to people with chronic, debilitating, and progressive diseases that are potentially life limiting, in the home or live-in environment of the patient. Advantages of home-based palliative care are the provision of comfort to patients in familiar surroundings, easy access, security, independence, increased effective care, and spreading awareness in the community. This study was conducted in 60 adults in Thiruvwarppu Panchayat using a

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semi-structured questionnaire to assess the awareness about community palliative care services and to study the utilization pattern of the services by the community. Out of 60 study participants, 57(95%) of them had heard about community palliative care units. 93% had availed palliative care services for a family member. From the study, it was understood that the study population had good awareness about community palliative care services. Further improvement in the reach of services can be made possible by involvement of grass root level workers, conduct of community programs through schools, colleges, kudumbasree and other Self Help Groups and involvement of NGOs to provide better facilities to the patients.

[Keywords : Awareness, Palliative Care, Utilization Pattern, Kerala]

1. Introduction

Palliative care is a specialty of health care that deals with not only the attitude and values of care, but caters to the patient dealing with chronic, debilitating, life-threatening illness from diagnosis till death. It not only aims to provide optimal quality and organized care to these patients, but also helps in the bereavement of the family and caretakers after the death of the patient. The WHO defined palliative care as “an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification, impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial, and spiritual.”¹ The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights reports that it is critical to provide “attention and care for chronically and terminally ill persons, sparing them avoidable pain and enabling them to die with dignity.”² Thus, palliative care has its sphere of influence not only at the physical and emotional needs of the patients and their relatives, but also aims to improve the physician-patient communication and provision of multispecialty coordinated care.³ The need for palliative care is ever increasing at a faster pace due to increase in aging population as well as increase in cancers and other NCDs. According to Worldwide Palliative Care Alliance (WPCA), although more than 100 million people across the world would benefit from hospice and palliative care annually, less than 8% of those in need access it.⁴ It is estimated that in India around 1 million people are diagnosed with cancer every year. Around 80% of all cancers are diagnosed in the advanced stage when treatment is less effective and palliative care becomes absolutely essential.⁵

The palliative care medicine gained its momentum in the early 1990s mainly driven by the nongovernmental sector promoting awareness and increasing avenues of care.⁶ The Pain and Palliative Care Society, Calicut, Kerala, formed in 1993, is one of the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that have played a pioneering role in developing palliative care in the country.⁷ Kerala has been the pioneer for offering excellent palliative care in our country supported by government policy that ropes provision of palliative care through the public health system.^{8,9} At present, there are approximately 1000 palliative care units in India, with about 90% of these being located in Kerala which caters to only 3% of country's population.¹⁰

Home-based palliative care is care provided to people with chronic, debilitating, and progressive diseases that are potentially life limiting, in the home or live-in environment of the patient. It is generally delivered by an interdisciplinary team trained in palliative care, which includes doctors, nurses, paramedical staff, and volunteers.¹⁰ The WHO India Country Office has developed guidelines for providing home-based palliative care.¹¹ The basic components of home-based palliative care include a willing and accessible patient, an available caregiver, a conducive home/live-in environment, a properly trained team, 24-h support, means of transport, network for supportive care, and a homecare kit. Advantages of home-based palliative care are the provision of comfort to patients in familiar surroundings, easy access, security, independence, increased effective care, and spreading awareness in the community. By increasing the proportion of community and homecare, palliative care can reduce costs associated with hospital stays and emergency admissions. One of the key objectives of the National Program for prevention and control of cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and stroke is to establish and develop a capacity for palliative and rehabilitative care.¹² The proposed structure under this program includes setting up facilities for patients requiring home-based care and day care. A team consisting of nurses and counselors should be trained in identifying symptoms, pain management, communication, psychosocial and emotional care, nursing needs of the terminally ill, and ethics of palliative care. The activities at the state, district, Community Health Centre, and sub-center levels ought to be closely monitored through the NCD cell at different levels. Earlier studies have reported that around 12-28% of patients chose to opt out of palliative care for various reasons

which increases with a decrease in social support from the clinic and the number of home visits by the physician.^{13,14} Understanding the patient characteristics, utilization of home-based palliative care and its predictors can assist service planners in the appropriate allocation of resources and service packaging to meet the complex needs of palliative care patients.¹⁵ However, there is limited information on general awareness about palliative care among the public and the utilization pattern of palliative care. This study was conducted to assess the awareness about community palliative care services and to study the utilization pattern of the services by the community

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Study Design

The study design is exploratory in nature and uses cross sectional analysis.

2.2 Study Setting

Thiruvārppu Panchayat, Kottayam District of Kerala State, India is study setting.

2.3 Study Population

Adults aged 18 years and above who are permanent residents of Thiruvārppu Panchayat constitute the universe of this study.

2.4 Study Tool

A pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire has been used in the study.

2.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Sample size of this study is 60 and technique used to select respondents is convenient sampling.

2.6 Data Analysis

The data collected from the study was entered into Microsoft Excel and analyzed. The results have been expressed in percentages and proportions.

3. Results

Out of 60 study participants, 57 (95%) of them had heard about community palliative care units. The main source of their

information was their health worker (87%), followed by television (13%). The socio-demographic details of the study participants is given in the following table :

Table-1 : Socio-demographic profile of study participants

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age group		
18-30 years	3	5.0
31-45 years	19	31.7
Above 45 years	38	63.3
Total	60	100.0
Gender		
Male	8	13.3
Female	52	86.7
Total	60	100.0
Religion		
Hindu	32	53.3
Christian	19	31.7
Muslims	9	31.7
Total	60	100.0
Educational qualification		
Illiterate	13	21.7
Primary	5	8.3
High school	11	18.3
Degree	31	51.7
Total	60	100.0
Type of family		
Nuclear family	53	88.3
Joint family	7	11.7
Total	60	100.0
Occupation		
Government job	5	8.3

Private job	12	20.0
Unemployed	19	31.7
Others	24	40.0
Total	60	100.0
Economic status		
BPL	13	21.7
APL	47	78.3
Total	60	100.0

Majority of study participants (77%) believed palliative care was a health service provided (Table-2). Out of the total study population, 93% had availed palliative care services for a family member. Majority of the respondents (71.7 percent) were aware that palliative care services are not only for the bedridden patients. It was understood that more than one-third of the respondents (35 percent) knew that, for availing the services, the beneficiary needs to be registered at the PHC. While 95% of the beneficiaries opined a prompt service and uninterrupted supply of medicines, a small percentage suggested that services could be better (Table-2).

Table-2 : Awareness about community palliative care units

Awareness	Frequency	Percentage
Heard about community Palliative care units?		
Yes	57	95.0
No	3	5.0
Total	60	100.0
What you mean by palliative care?		
Health service	46	76.7
Health awareness program	14	23.3
Total	60	100.0
Does care helps to reduce the health problems in the society?		
Yes	55	91.7
No	5	8.3
Total	60	100.0

Does palliative care services reduce the burden of the family?		
Yes	56	93.3
No	4	6.7
Total	60	100.0
Do Palliative care staff visit houses in your area?		
Yes	53	95.0
No	7	5.0
Total	60	100.0
Does palliative care provide any equipment for the patients?		
Yes	56	93.3
No	4	6.7
Total	60	100.0
Does Palliative care unit provide services to the only bed ridden patients?		
Yes	17	28.3
No	43	71.7
Total	60	100.0
Have you received any medical benefits through the palliative care unit?		
Yes	56	93.3
No	4	6.7
Total	60	100.0
Prompt Services of doctors and other staff:		
Yes	53	94.6
No	3	5.4
Total	56	100.0
Uninterrupted supply of medicine from palliative care units:		
Yes	55	98.2
No	1	1.8
Total	56	100.0
Services received through palliative care units:		
Water bed	9	16.1
Walking Stick	14	25.0

Urine bag	10	17.9
Medical help	16	28.6
Wheel chair	7	12.5
Total	56	100.0
Do you feel improvement of quality is needed in palliative care services?		
Yes	59	98.3
No	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

4. Discussion

In our study, only 95% of people had heard about palliative care. In a study done by Kolchakova¹⁶, 15% of people heard about palliative care. In another study done by Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association,¹⁷ as much as 53% of people have heard about palliative care. Of them, 30% of people had some knowledge about palliative care. Other studies have reported that home-based palliative hospice care being associated with reduced hospitalizations.^{18,19,20} This association of community-based palliative care with reduced hospital admissions was consistent regardless of the underlying cause of death, be it cancer, COPD, organ failure or neurological conditions.

5. Conclusion

From the study, it was understood that the study population had good awareness about community palliative care services. Also majority of the study population was satisfied with the quality of care received through palliative care services. Further improvement in the reach of services can be made possible by involvement of grass root level workers, conduct of community programs through schools, colleges, kudumbasree and other Self Help Groups and involvement of NGOs to provide better facilities to the patients.

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Panchayati Raj System : An Efficient Tool in the Development of Rural India

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The present paper is the study of various government schemes in India for primary education with the help of Gram Panchayats. Author reviewed all popular schemes and contribution of panchayats in the scheme. Author found that there is neither shortage of schemes run by the government nor there is any shortage of funds allocated for them. The main reason for their slow implementation and failures is the fact that these programs are being determined and implemented by the authorities without taking the target group into confidence and specifically there is a widespread corruption at all levels.

[**Keywords** : Panchayati Raj, Rular education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid Day Meal Scheme]

1. Introduction

India, the world's largest democratic governance system can only succeed if it's democratic beliefs and values are permanent at grass root levels. Thus, the successful operation of local self governance ensures the success of democratic governance system.

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The panchayati Raj system is a concrete step to make the democracy more realistic as it constantly maintains the interest of people in local work, as they can solve their territorial problems at primary level by provincial methods. In order to accentuate the functioning of the system, Panchayati Raj Institutions provide training in governance and administration to local people directly and indirectly through their participation in governance.

Local self governance is featured as psychological and practical requirement of human being. In India, Panchayati Raj system has been in existence since ancient times and this assembly of five persons still continues to exist inspite of many political and economic changes.

Many authors have been studied the educational development in India. Bhattacharya (1982) conducted studies on planning in India and abroad. According to Webster (1995) there is undoubtedly a great deal of evidence that lends support to such arguments. In India, the post-independence development experience demonstrates that Central planning undertaken by a state which neither represent no reflects the interests of the rural poor and socially marginalized, can rarely cater for their needs. In such a situation, decentralization and democratization of the Government and the encouragement of non-state institutions to represent the marginalized and is excluded sections of the population are necessary prerequisite for better, and also more egalitarian, development.

However, the contemporary arguments for decentralized democracy and non-governmental organisations taking on a greater role in rural development also have powerful ideological assumptions behind them; assumptions that reflect theories of social changes and development whose roots lie primarily in western liberal philosophy. While there might be disagreement as to the specific nature of the problem involved, there is a general acceptance of the need to reject the state's leading role in economy and social development.

Gupta (1984) studied the schemes that is being run for rural development. He studied the effectiveness of the strategies for rural development through government schemes implemented by Banks. Rajshekhar (1998) examined the rural development strategies of NGOs based on the empirical data collection from NGOs in different part of Karnataka state. He mentioned that development practi-

tioner, government officials and foreign donors consider that NGOs by virtue of being small scale are flexible, innovative and participatory and are more successful in reaching the poor and in poverty elevation. This results rapid growth in funding of for NGO by government and external donors. Rajshekhar found in his study there is a mismatch between the objectives and activities and that NGOs strategies evolved not on the basis of peoples needs and aspirations but on the basis of donor consideration. He said this policy of the government of rural development programs with the help of NGOs is not on the right track

Connell (1994) concludes in this article that targeted programs are unlikely to have a major impact unless they are part of a broader agenda for social justice. Nambissan and Rao (2014) focus on the relationship between poverty and elementary education in India and specifically on the advocacy of markets for the schooling of poor children. I view poverty within a complex and relational framework that takes into account structural inequalities as well as multiple and intersecting deprivations that disadvantage and render vulnerable large sections of society.

Kumar et al. (2003) propose an alternate model for delivery of primary education in rural part of India. They mention in their paper that indifferent success of the present system of primary education in India need a complete change of the method of delivery of education. The model discussed by the authors has features that ensure flexibility, accountability and quality, which can help achieve the threefold objectives of elementary education - universal access, universal retention and universal achievement.

2. Panchayati Raj in India

The word 'Panchayatan' is mentioned in ancient Indian text which means an assembly of five people. During that period every village was independent. Distribution of land, management of means of irrigation, care of pastures, organisation of fair and festivals, solution of mutual disputes, security of village and recovery from goods dealers were the main functions of Panchayats. From the Buddhist period to the Mughal period, the Panchayati Raj can also be called a kind of local self government existed in one form or another. But the present local self government is more a product of British rule. In 1870, the resolution of decentralization of Lord Mayo

was passed, the prime motive of this resolution was to provide an opportunity to develop self government, empower municipal institutions and enable Indians and Europeans to have more relations with administrative matters than ever before.

3. Panchayati Raj in Independent India

After the independence, the constitution of India was drafted and came into force on 26 January 1950. Under the constitution, panchayati Raj was included in the directive principles of State policy. The article 40 of the constitution provide that state will be obliged to organise the gram panchayats in such a way that it functions as a unit of local self government. After independence Community Development Program was the first effort towards the democratic decentralisation in India. This program was started from 2 October 1952 on the auspicious occasion of Gandhi Jayanti. But unfortunately it failed in its objectives. Balwant Rai Mehta committee (1957) was formed to review the program. The committee in its report stated the lack of popularity as the reason for the failure of the Community Development Program. The committee stated that in order to establish democracy in villages, there must be decentralization of power in the true sense. This committee recommended the establishment of a three tier Panchayati Raj based on democratic decentralisation. It worked on three levels namely - Gram Panchayat at village level, Panchayat Samiti at middle/block level, Zila Parishad at top/district level.

Panchayati Raj system was introduced on 2 October 1959 in Nagaur district of Rajasthan on the recommendation of Mehta committee and within the next 2-3 years, panchayati Raj system was enforced in most of the states of the country. But this excitement soon disappeared and the period between 1969 to 1977 is considered as a period of decline for Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The Janata party government formed in 1977 was interested to decentralize the powers and functions of local level bodies. So it appointed a 13 member Panchayati Raj commission headed by Ashok Mehta in December 1977. The purpose behind the setting up of this commission was to provide suggestions to make Panchayati Raj meaningful that may work for the welfare of the people. After this G.V.K. Rao committee (1985) and L. M. Singhvi committee (1986) suggested that the the Panchayati Raj Institutions should be

empowered for the success of decentralization. With a view to making positive efforts in all these directions and giving constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institutions, the Rajiv Gandhi government in 1989 presented the 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill before the parliament but this amendment bill could not be passed due to political reasons. The bill related to Panchayati Raj Institutions was again introduced in Lok Sabha on 16 December 1991 with some amendments. The bill was referred to select committee. The committee gave its consent in July 1992 and the number of the bill was changed to 73rd Constitutional Amendment which was passed in Lok Sabha on 22 December 1992 and in Rajya Sabha on 23 December 1992, which when approved by 17 state legislatures was sent for presidential approval. The bill was approved by the President on 20 April 1993 and it came into force from 25 April 1993. This amendment has added 9 after the previous part 8 of the constitution, which is titled 'Panchayat'. By this, the provisions related to panchayats have been included in the article 243 which contains 15 sub articles. This act also adds a new eleventh schedule to the constitution by article 243 (G) which has the following 29 subjects :

1. Agriculture.
2. Land reform and soil conservation.
3. Minor irrigation, water management and watershed management.
4. Animal husbandry, dairying, poultry.
5. Fisheries.
6. Soil forestry and farm forestry.
7. Minor forest produce.
8. Small scale industries including food processing industries.
9. Khadi, village and cottage industries.
10. Rural housing.
11. Drinking water.
12. Fuel.
13. Road, culverts, bridges, ferries, waterways and other means of communication.
14. Rural electrification including distribution of electricity.
15. Non conventional sources of energy.
16. Poverty alleviation program.

17. Education including primary and secondary schools.
18. Adult and non-formal education.
19. Libraries.
20. Markets and fairs.
21. Cultural activities.
22. Health and sanitation, primary health centres.
23. Family welfare.
24. Technical training and vocational education.
25. Women and child development.
26. Social welfare.
27. Welfare of the weaker section particularly welfare of schedule caste and scheduled Tribes.
28. Public distribution system.
29. Maintenance of community assets.

The government also made considerable efforts to strengthen the financial position of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Presently, Panchayats receive funds from three sources.

Thus, 73rd constitutional amendment gave life to the deceased Panchayats. Their existence has been secured by being given constitutional status. The biggest achievement of this act is that it will bring uniformity in the formation of panchayats across the country and regular elections will be held. By this act, the panchayats have not only got administrative rights but also ensured the availability of financial resources which has helped in rural development.

4. Gram/Village Panchayat

Gram panchayat is the smallest unit of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The state government has the authority to declare a village or a group of villages a Panchayat area for every thousand population. A Gram Panchayat then will be established in the name of this Panchayat area. Under Sec 12(1)a, the organisation of the panchayat will be declared only after the election of Pradhan and 2/3 of its members. Then, Gram Panchayat will form total six communities to assist in its work. The gram panchayat may entrust these committees to perform all or some of its functions as per the requirement. If there is a function that two or more Gram Panchayat want to work together, they can also form a joint committee.

Functions of gram panchayat (Sec.15) :

1. Related to agriculture and horticulture.
2. Related to minor irrigation.
3. Related to animal husbandry.
4. Related to forest and trees.
5. Related to small industries.
6. Related to water.
7. related to housing.
8. Related to fuel.
9. Related to roads, culverts, bridges etc.
10. Related to energy.
11. Related to poverty.
12. Related to education and art.
13. Related to sports and cultural affairs.
14. Related to panchayats.
15. Related to health and welfare.
16. Related to essential commodity.
17. Related to weaker sections.

5. Rural Development

The importance of rural development is self evident in developing countries like India where majority of population resides in villages. In fact, rural development means giving priority to rural development programs for the people living in these areas. This includes things like agricultural development, rural housing, rural planning, health, education, communication, changes in socio-economic structure. But the development of rural people means improving their standard of living. Thus, rural development is all round development of rural areas.

The schemes that is being run by education department are as follows :

1. **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan** : Sarva Shiksha abhiyan is a major program of the Government of India. It was launched in November 2001 by Atal Bihari Vajpayee for a fixed time period. This program aims to achieve universalisation of quality

primary education by 2010. Thus today, all primary schools in the country provide free education.

2. **Kanya Vidya dhan Yojana** : This scheme was launched by the Uttar Pradesh government in April 2004. Its objective is to promote girls education in the state by encouraging the girls belonging to below poverty line families to go for higher education. Under this scheme, the girls who have passed intermediate were given an amount of Rs 20000 as an incentive to create their interest in the education. Now this amount has been increased to Rs 30000. So far 1 lakh girls have been benefited under this scheme. Initially, only the girl students of UP board were given benefit in this, but later girls from CBSE, ICSC board, Secondary Sanskrit Shikshan board and madrasa board have also been included.
3. **Mid Day Meal Scheme** : This scheme has been implemented by the government of India throughout the country. It aims to upgrade the nutritional health of the students. This scheme was started by the former chief minister of Tamil Nadu M.G. Ramachandran during his tenure to attract children towards the school. After its fruitful results, the central government implemented the scheme all over the country in 2004. Features of this scheme are as follows :
 - At present, under this scheme, per day 100 gram of wheat/ rice per student with the expenditure of Rs 4.48 per student for cooking has been approved.
 - The central government also pays for the transportation from Central warehouse to state warehouse and from there to the children.
 - The responsibility of running this scheme in primary schools has been entrusted to the Gram Pradhan, Principal and Teachers of the school.

This scheme is still running successfully without fixation of termination period. This scheme in villages is being run by Gram Pradhan, as the allocation of the raw/uncooked food grains according to per child is done only by the Pradhan of the village and it is cooked under the supervision of the Teachers. Moreover, different food menu have been prepared from Monday to Saturday by the government like Roti-Sabji on Monday, Dal-Rice on Tuesday, Milk (150 ml per child), Tehri on

Wednesday, Roti-Sabji, Dal-Roti on Thursday, Tehri on Friday and Sabji-Rice on Saturday and 1 fruit, Suji Halwa or Kheer on Monday etc. But, it is found that only Daliya, Khichdi etc are distributed in most of the primary schools.

4. **Shiksha Mitra Yojana** : This scheme was launched by Uttar Pradesh government by an executive order issued on 26 May 1999. In order to achieve the goal of universalization of primary education in the state, this scheme was implemented with 65% assistance from Central Government and 35% from state government to overcome the shortage of teachers in primary schools. Shiksha Mitra must have passed intermediate examination. They were being appointed at a salary of Rs 2250 per month which is now increased to Rs 10,000 per month.
5. **Shiksha Guarantee Yojana** : In order to achieve 100 percent literacy amongst the children of remote areas, the scheme was approved in the year 2001-02 for those areas where young children face difficulty as they have to walk far to reach schools.
6. **Nishulk Pathya Pustak Vitran Yojana** : This scheme was launched in the year 2001-02. This scheme, provides a provision of free textbooks in all the districts under Sarva Shiksha abhiyan at primary and higher level of education to all the girls and the boys belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes categories.
7. **Chhatravriti Yojana** : This scheme is being run by the social welfare department. Under this scheme, scholarship is provided every year to class 1 to 8 students of scheduled caste and scheduled Tribes.
8. **B.T.C. Prashikshu Yojana** : Under this scheme, every candidate who passes the BTC examination is given a job as a teacher of primary school.

6. Role of Gram Panchayat in the Schemes

The management of primary education has been given to the Gram Panchayats in July 1999 by the government of Uttar Pradesh under the joint provision of Basic Education Act, Uttar Pradesh and Panchayati Raj Act, Uttar Pradesh.

Thus, the role of panchayats in the field of primary education has become extremely significant. The function of the panchayats is to discharge the responsibility of the purchase of school building

materials, arrangement of mid day meals for the children, selection of teachers and the distribution of textbooks and scholarships etc.

NPRC (Nyay Panchayat Resource Centre) for every 10 to 15 schools have been set up at the headquarters of each Nyay Panchayat, which organise and conduct educational and other curricular activities.

7. Study : Implementation and Impact of above Schemes in Selected Area

The Objective of the study is to identify the level of development in the villages after the availability of more and more financial resources to Gram Panchayats and the implementation of various governments programs. Also one more objective is to analyse the effect of primary schools and other educational schemes on the education level of the village children and how far do the employees recruited under these schemes are able to achieve the target? Whether the people of the village want to send their children to school or not? If not, why? What are the reasons behind this?

This study is related to the rural society of Barabanki district on India. Barabanki is located about 29 km East of Lucknow, the capital city of Uttar Pradesh state. The study has been conducted in about 20 different areas of the district.

In my study, I observe that the level of education in the selected area is not disappointing. The educational level here has improved considerably than before, it can be said, it is in a satisfactory condition. Yet, a large number of people here are illiterate. But now almost all the children of the village go to school because of the educational schemes run by the government. The total number of school going children have also increased.

All the above mentioned schemes are running in the selected area but they are not implemented properly. The Objective of Sarva Shiksha abhiyan is to attract children towards schools and ensure the implementation of mandatory attendance in the schools are not being implemented properly. Although several objectives explaining the importance of education to children and their families in villages are failing. The reason is not unwillingness of the parents but their untrust in the government and its schemes.

Among all the schemes run by the government, Mid-day meal is seems to be the most directionless scheme. The truth of this scheme

is often revealed in newspapers and random inspections. According to Dainik Jagran of 12 June 2005, inaccurate number of students are being presented in the registers of the schools. For instance, if the actual number of students present in school are 150 or 200, then generally students presented in the register log is 300 or more. Here, fraud in weighing by Kotedars are very common. In which, largest part belongs to Gram Pradhan. In this series of corruption, fraud is being done in food menu as well. In order to save children from malnutrition, the government has already set a menu for mid day meal to provide them healthy food. On the basis of this, Puri-Sabji, Tehri, Daliya, Kheer, Fruits and Milk have been kept in the menu. But in reality Khichdi without dal and Daliya boiled in water are given to children. Many a times, dangerous khesari dal which is banned as a food item is added to the Dal. The fruits given are also not of good quality. Moreover, water is added to the milk that is fixed to be given to children in 150 ml quantity. In many places, 21 litres of milk is registered but only 6 litres of milk is purchased, the remaining money is saved by the school staff and children are served with the watery milk.

It is observed many a times that Gram Pradhan and Headmaster give wheat and rice to their cattle, which was allocated for the school children. According to various newspapers children of primary schools are being served Khichdi cooked from rotten rice. School children are usually served food in less quantity and it is very common to find insects, straws and iron nails in the food. Sometimes poisonous insects also fall in the food. A similar incident took place in Bihar, when food had become poisonous after a lizard fall into it, due to which many children got sick and died.

In villages, the truth of the above statements is 100% visible. While talking to Gram Pradhan, he replies that he is given such a low quality of ration while the truth is something else. After extensive study, a teacher said that it would be less profitable if they serve Tehri or PuriSabji to children. As everyone from top to bottom is involved in the entire corruption or scam, that is why Gram Pradhan and Headmaster also have to give a share to the Secretary and B.D.O. etc. To understand it better, let take an example, If he registers 3 kg of pulse at the rate of Rs 60 per kg and gives only 1 kg of pulse for mid day meal, then he makes a profit of Rs 120. While if he registers 3 kg of potatoes for Tehri at the rate of Rs 10 per kg and gives only 1 kg of

potato for mid day meal, then he can only make Rs 20. And also if he registers 21 litres of milk and pays for only 6 litres, he can save Rs 450 for 15 litres of milk at the rate of Rs 30 per litre. Other than this, Gram Pradhan appoints only that woman to cook mid day meal who is ready to cook at Rs 700 or 800 per month by putting her thumb in register for Rs 1500 per month. In fact, when there 2 to 3 cooks are appointed in the school, Gram Pradhan keeps one of them to cook food in his house.

According to a senior teacher of primary school, the number of students have increased due to Mid day meal scheme. But these students are more interested in lunch only, they do not have any interest in studies. These children do not come to school at the time of harvesting and sowing as they assist their families in labour. But all the children are generally present at the time of mid day meal. On complaining to their parents, they reply "homes run from money and not from education". Kanya Vidya dhan Yojana is not implemented by Gram Panchayat. Shiksha Mitra are also doing well in their job. Apart from this, very little part of the sanctioned amount is sent for the construction and the beautification of primary schools and only formalities are done. Many schools have neither boundary walls, nor toilet facilities for students, nor do they have drinking water, nor electricity. In such an environment, although teachers work hard to teach children, it is very difficult task in summer to teach 250 to 300 children in a two room school.

8. Conclusion

The present study of all the schemes run by the Village development Department and their implementation in selected area, allow to withdraw the conclusion that there is neither shortage of schemes run by the department nor there is any shortage of funds allocated for them. The main reason for their slow implementation and failures is the fact that these programs are being determined and implemented by the authorities without taking the target group into confidence and specifically there is a widespread corruption at all levels. Use of Panchayati Raj system in the growth of rural primary education is a more democratic way to involve people in the implementation of schemes for the their children. Use of technology in the monitoring of programme can be useful to control corruption in the various schemes.

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Lal Ded : The Voice of Kashmiri Identity and Culture

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The fourteenth century iconoclastic Kashmiri saint-poet Lal Ded had a profound effect on the people of Kashmir. Her poetry is revered by all Kashmiris and has been passed down from one generation to the next, orally. Many say she is synonymous with Kashmir. Her legends, lore, and her vakhs have been celebrated as an essential part of Kashmiri identity. With the passage of time, each generation changes its perception and Lal Ded's spiritual messages have been reinvented too. But her message of secularism remains unchanged. She broke the shackles of rigid social rules and lived the life of a wandering mystic. This research paper makes an effort to connect her verses and philosophy with Kashmiri culture and identity which is above religion and caste.

[**Keywords** : Lal Ded, Lalla, Kashmir, Religion, Culture, Identity]

Lal Ded was a fourteenth century female mystic poet from Kashmir. Also known as Lalla, Lallesvari, Lalla Aarifa, Lalla Yogiswari- her name is considered synonymous with Kashmiri culture. Treasured by all Kashmiris - irrespective of their religion, she left behind a vast collection of short poetic verses known as vakhs. Composed in the Kashmiri language, her verses are a vital part of modern Indian literature.

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Lal Ded gave expression to her mystic and poetic inclinations through her vakhs in the Kashmiri language. For her secular leanings, she was equally revered by all communities. In her verses, she covers vast areas of spirituality - religion, Shaivism and even Vedanta - where she says that she is reading the Bhagavad Gita every moment of her life.¹ Her vakhs advocate a moral and ethical code of conduct and provide tips for spiritual advancement. They strike us like brief and blinding bursts of light: epiphanic and provocative. They move between the doubtful and the assured, with an insight gained through resilience and reflection. The idea is to fight the inner demons and not fellow humanity. She recites :

“... I wrestled with the darkness inside me
Knocked it down
Clawed at it
Ripped it to shreds.”

In his book “I, Lalla: The Poems of Lal Ded”, Ranjit Hoskote tries to decipher the myth and mystery surrounding Lal Ded. He elaborates: “To the outer world, Lal Ded is arguably Kashmir’s best known spiritual and literary figure; within Kashmir, she has been venerated both by Hindus and Muslims for nearly seven centuries. For most of that period, she has successfully eluded the proprietorial claims of religious monopolists... It is true that Lal Ded was constructed differently by each community, but she was simultaneously Lallesvari or Lalla Yogini to the Hindus and Lal’arifa to the Muslims.”²

There is no exact date or year of Lal Ded’s birth. The sources differ and it is generally assumed that she was born between 1317 and 1320, near Srinagar in a Kashmiri Brahmin family. It is suggested that she died either in 1373 or 1392, although these are tentative years. With the passage of time, her life has passed into a legend; and along with her verses, she has become a part of Kashmiri folklore. Through oral traditions, her vakhs have been carried forward from generation to generation. The details of her early life portray her as a woman with spiritual aspirations. She received brief education in religious texts before she was married at the young age of twelve, as per the custom of her times. After marriage she was renamed as Padmavati, but she thought of herself only as Lalla.

Her married life was a torturous one. She was regularly mistreated by her husband. Her mother-in-law often starved her by

putting flat stone in her plate and cover it with rice, so it would look as a bigger heap of food. A verse attributed to Lal Ded explains her suffering: "Whether they kill a ram or a sheep/ Lalla will get only a stone to eat." It can be assumed that she never complained as she gradually turned to ascetic practices using this experience to prepare herself for self-imposed discipline.

Unable to withstand the rigid rules of marriage, she renounced her family life at twenty-six and became a shelter less mystic wandering in rags and surviving on alms. She eventually became a disciple of a spiritual leader, Sidh Srikanth who was a Shaivite. She too became an ardent practitioner of Shaivism which is also known as Trika Shastra. Following this path, she started reciting proverbs and verses based on her faith and ideology. For a woman, it was an unprecedented move to renounce the socially-accepted, traditional role of a devoted wife and live her life as a mystic and poet without any social security. This decision also shows her exceptional faith and dauntless spirit.

14th century Kashmir was going through a time of transition between Sanskritic and Islamic influences. Lal-Ded was a very significant historical bridge that connected the two ends of this divide very effectively. She was the product of faith that had been evolving in Kashmir during medieval times. Her predecessors were Kashmiri scholars and mystics like Vasugupta Rishi, Acharaya Somanand and Acharaya Utpal Dev. Her immediate successor was Nund Rishi (Sheikh Nur-ud-Din), who is considered another pillar of Kashmiri identity. He founded the Muslim Rishi order in Kashmir. Praising Lal Ded, Nund Rishi had this to say about her :

It was Lalla of Padmanpur,
Who drank in long draughts, nectar Divine.
She was the Divine Manifestation for us,
May thou Lord bestow a similar boon upon me.³

As her understanding of mysticism grew, she began to see God as one powerful entity irrespective of religion. Her poetry reflects the peaceful thought of engagement with both Shaivism and Sufism. She imbibed uniformly from all religious influences and languages that made contact with the Indian sub-continent during her life, absorbing from Sanskrit, Islamic, Sufi, and Sikh cultures. She revolted against the oppressive social structures that stifled and chained human spirit. She also questioned practices of injustice that

were prevalent during the times. She did not hesitate to lash out even at priests :

“Idol is of stone, temple is of stone;
Above (temple) and below (idol) are one;
Which of them will you worship O fool?
Cause thou the union of mind with Soul.”

In another vakh, she talks of human beings chasing materialism over good deeds :

“You’ve cut yourself a hide and measured it
But what seeds have you sown that will bear you fruit?
Fool! Teaching you is like throwing a ball at a gatepost
Or feeding jaggery to an ox, hoping for milk.”

In yet another short verse, she minces no words to mock the ceremonies and rituals observed by fundamentalists and ritualists :

“O fool, right action does not lie
in observing fasts and ceremonial rites.
O fool, right action does not lie
in providing for bodily comfort and ease.
In contemplation of the Self alone
is right action and right counsel for you.”

Her rebellion was unprecedented. She challenged the validity of all the socio-political and religious structures. As she gained popularity among the masses, she was perceived as a threat to the established social order by the privileged classes of the times. To neutralise the impact of this rebellion, the custodians of tradition declared her to be mad and insane for abandoning her familial ties. But Lal Ded believed that there is no distinction between a hermit and a family person. What matters is the inner temperament - whether you have ‘dissolved your desires in the river of time’ :

“Some run away from home, some escape the hermitage.
No orchard bears fruit for the barren mind.
Day and night, count the rosary of your breath,
And stay put wherever you are.”

Lal Ded’s sayings, poetry and philosophy are timeless and a true embodiment of Kashmiri culture. She articulated the spiritual

path in Kashmiri language which was the language of the man in the street. This way she made it available to the masses irrespective of religion, caste or region. This act of making Kashmiri language the tool for spreading her message of secularism through her verses- was probably a divine inspiration for her. This act remains the greatest revolutionary act in the cultural history of Kashmir and makes her the undisputed founder not only of the contemporary Kashmiri literature but also of the contemporary Kashmiri culture.⁴

As a wanderer, she spoke directly to the people, reaching the peasants across the Valley and “sharing her universal message, liberating the doctrine from any sectarian, local or regional colour” In one of her well known vakh she emphasizes that there is no distinction between people of different faiths as “the sun knows not the Hindu different to the Muslim.”⁵

Lal Ded popularized the ritual free Trika Shastra which assimilates not only the essence of Buddhist spirituality but also reaches out to the Sufi-Mystic tradition of Islam. In Buddhist tradition being a Bodhi-sattva implies being full of compassion conjoined with insight into reality, realizing emptiness (shunaya) or the essence of all things.⁶ In this light we may consider this vakh by her :

Realization is rare indeed,
 Seek not afar,
 it is nearby you
 First slay desire,
 then still the mind,
 giving up vain imaginings
 Then meditate on self within and lo!
 The void merges in the void.

As her fame spread through the valley, miracles were attributed to her life like many other saints. Some of these anecdotes depict the legend of Lal Ded attaching incredible powers to her. One such tale narrates that even before she left home to become a mystic, her powers were unmistakable. It is said that she left home very early every morning to fetch drinkable water and spent time there in seclusion to meditate and pray. One day when she returned with an earthen pot full of water, her jealous husband was hiding to spy on her. Unable to find any proof, he lost his temper and struck the pot

with a stick. The pot broke into pieces, but the water did not spill. Lal Ded filled all the pots with this water and then threw remaining water outside the house. A pond sprang up where the water touched the earth. This pond is known as Lal Tang and is said to have been filled with water till early 20th century.

Another myth shares the anecdote of first meeting between Lal Ded and Shah Hamdan. Shah Hamdan was her contemporary and a famous saint, who had greatly influenced her ideology. Folklore says that Lal Ded used to wander in semi-naked condition. One day Shah Hamdan came to meet her. Trying to hide from him, she jumped into a baker's heated oven saying 'He is a man, who fears God, and there are very few such men about'. The baker thought that the woman must have surely died in the hot oven. But much to his surprise, Lal Ded appeared from the oven clad in her finest clothes and hastened to meet Shah Hamdan.

Another anecdote is associated with her death. Both Hindus and Muslims staked a claim to her body. To settle the dispute her spirit asked to bring two large pots. The body was placed inside one with the other inverted over the head. The body began to shrink slowly till the two pots overlapped. When her followers lifted the inverted pot, they found it filled with water. Half of the water was taken by Hindus and other half was claimed by Muslims.

There is no doubt that Lal Ded's outpourings fostered spiritual accommodation between religious groups in her times as well as in the coming centuries. Political turmoil and terrorism that erupted in the Kashmir Valley in the late 20th century resulted in growing atmosphere of distrust and hatred between Kashmiri Pandits and Muslims. It was followed by mass exodus of the Pandit community from Kashmir. These dynamics of social change have tried to divide the culture of Kashmir through the prism of narrow religion and sectarianism.

Lal Ded's poetry and personality has become a part of this rivalry where both religions have tried to stake a claim on her. This stand is in exact contradiction with her ideology and poetic legacy. She celebrated unity, peace and simplicity and not acrimony and bitterness. Especially today in the times of rising conflicts and divisions on the basis of religion, it is important to remember her contribution towards inter-religious dialogue and tolerance. Her philosophy propagated the idea of integrated humanity. But She knew it was a tremendously difficult challenge. In one vakh, she says:

“I could learn to disperse the southern clouds.
 I could learn how to drain out the sea,
 I could learn to heal the source of a leper,
 But I could never learn the art to convince a fool”

Today, Lal Ded lives in the memory of all literature loving Indians. Young or old, each generation has found a reason to revel at her verses that celebrate Kashmiri identity and culture. In the 21st century, her poetry is read and recited by Kashmiris to each other and to friends. It is collected in poetry books and anthologies. It is shared on the internet, told in stories and shown gloriously in media. Ikram Ullah, a young Kashmiri poet, voices our admiration and alludes to her heritage in these words:

“I belong to a Valley so exquisite.
 She mothered the mystic Nund resh...And
 blew breath in the eloquent Lal Ded.
 Whose shrukhs and vakhs petrify the generations after
 them...”

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(The verses/vakhs, quoted in the research paper, are taken from Ranjit Hoskote’s book ‘I, Lal Ded: The poems of Lal Ded’ (sourced from Google archives) and from M H Zaffar’s article ‘Lal Ded: The Mystic of Kashmir’). ★

Philosophical Ethics in Indian Economic Globalization since the Middle Ages : Inter-subjective Norms as Causal Factors

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The economic globalization theory often rests on the pre- theoretical conformity to global heterogeneity, and as such, usually implies the universalization of particularism. Whereas international trade and commerce, is usually inspired by realism that accepts the state itself as the significant agent in the global trading system, an underlying influential philosophical understanding of economic globalization relies on perspectives about motivated ethical values, both positive and negative. I would argue that Indian philosophical ethical values for long have conformed to the universalizing of ethics and socio-philosophical values that have long influenced factors in Indian economic globalization since the Middle Ages. In the process, I would add that Indian sustained philosophical consciousness, expressed as inter-subjectivity, has been enriched by Indian- sustained philosophical values, declaring that there could be no cultural universalism in the process of economic causation. Do intersubjective trade-related philosophic norms speak of exclusion of dichotomies such as traditional/modern and the West and the Rest to transcend conflicting modes in understanding the dynamics of economic globalization in India? It is argued here that Indian intensification of conscious-

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ness may be used to reconstruct the image of a “single world,” admitting that philosophical values always seek continuous confirmation for admissibility. Admittedly, the principles of Indian philosophy-based ethical thought urging for economic globalization displayed striking similarities to those found in pre-modern western philosophy, as well.

[**Keywords** : Philosophical ethics, Economic globalization, Middle ages, Philosophical approach]

1. Economic Globalization and Insufficiency in the Existing Philosophical Approach

Looking at the pre-modern period, we recognize the varied types of trade exchanges that were bound by different types of philosophical interpretations, although generalized philosophy has denied the narrow objectivity altogether because the philosophy of mind confronts basic questions of subjectivity and objectivity.¹ There were adequate recorded instances of motivational declarations as social/philosophical factors that influenced objectives and basic principles of economic globalization throughout the ages. For instance, the idea of “atom,” which consists of a multiple distinct blades, was first observed by the Greek philosopher Democritus (460-370 B. C.), but was elaborated independently by the Indian philosopher Vasubandhu (4th century A.D.), and later on by Candrakirti (8th century A.D.). Unlike the Graeco-Roman material vision, both Chinese and Indian commercial practices developed a wider historical context, conforming to both the material and ethical worldviews in international trade. We know that logical analysis of the *Vaisheshika* school about atomism during the second century B.C., and the doctrine of negation (*Nyaya* School of Logic) have been crucial in drawing scientific conclusions about human activity. As Potter (19789) argues, in the early texts of *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, there are references to the notion of argument, *tarka*, on one side, and on the other logic, *Nynya*. In *Nyaya logic*, there are five steps including *hetu*, cause, and *paksa*, hypothesis, to analyze a good reasoning process.²

The history of generalized “oriental globalization” adopted a new time frame but discussed the “Asian hegemony” between 1400-1800 to highlight the misdeeds of the commercial dependency theory. The “oriental globalization” literature represented a kind of Sino-centrism and Indo-centrism as a partial global view. Viewed from the stance of oriental globalization, European globalizing

development with Eurocentrism, the occidental globalization seems to be episodes and phases in a much wider multicentric global economic process. Broadly, globalization was a way of thinking about the “web of belief” that silently acted upon economic globalization in India. The Indian Ocean as the “World’s Highway,” had a greater concentration of trade at a greater speed than previously acknowledged.³ However, as Davidson (1986) argues, historians of economic globalization advocacy have been unable to explain the connection between people’s experiences and philosophical beliefs that would allow the first to justify the second.⁴

In the West, Max Weber’s institutionalization of human cognition, which originated in the European philosophical Enlightenment, projects only the fragments of social/economic life, especially Protestant material enterprising spirit, but remains neutral in its relation to the ethical goals in expansive exchanges of goods and valuable marketable commodities. Jurgen Habermas (1984) argues that communicative action presupposes alternative courses of action with a view to realizing a meaningful end through global inter-subjectivity to connect trade and commerce. Hans J. Morgenthau, the “high priest of post war realism,” argues that ethical will and “the resources to Indian moral objectives to completion” have so far remained mostly insufficiently examined.⁵ Kuhn (1977) is not far from the truth when he declares that “economic anthropology” is still in the “pre-paradigm” stage. Indeed, ethics become transcendental to reflect on constitutive intentionality in causation, but the concept remains unexplored in the history of Indian economic globalization. Frequently, some moral values have been attached to the globalization discourse, but they remained not very well-directed toward the causation. The concept of “cultural amnesia,” adequately developed by Stephen Bertman (2000) speaks of the current crisis of memory out of selectively forgetting the past related traditions.⁶

No doubt, David Harvey forcefully argues that although concepts of “economic globalization and time” may be “socially constructed,” but they might not operate with the full force of facts, playing a key role in the processes of “social reproduction of knowledge.”⁷ As an East Asian specialist examining global business practices, John E. Wills, in his *A Global History* (2002), partly following Andre Gunder Frank’s world-system theory, finds that

various commercial societies having diverse cultures in various localities found trade and cultural connections that linked distant regions for many material and “spiritual reasons.”⁸ Philip D. Curtin has demonstrated the value of tracing a particular topic such as cross-cultural trade over extended periods of time, giving importance to an expansive globalizing thought, applied to commercial transaction. Tucker (1966) suggests that culture is a special way of theorizing of “social motives” to understand an eventual meaning that are placed behind causal action and reaction. All these causal explanations have become partial and not comprehensive because their goals were legitimately different but being hegemonic, these interpretations, being social values in economic globalization, need to be interconnected with geographical factors to identify causal connections. Is there any specific Indian commercial worldview, being a non-western culture, deserves appropriate interpretation of Eastern philosophic norms? Most current literature has examined cultural urges without specifying the connections between ideas and trade-realities in developing causation. Looking at pre-modern period, we need to recognize the presence of different kinds of trade exchanges to consider how they might have informed cultural encounters in trade bargaining and the exchange of goods and services.

J.H. Boeke (1953) argues that in the historical context, it is possible to characterize a society as an economic order, shaped largely by the “social spirit,” including the organizational forms in behavior and the technique dominating it.⁹ In this context, “global” does not equal “West” and thus, Indian economic globalization processes, being economic-cultural contacts with global partners, have demonstrated a philosophical feature both in causation and effects outside the usual scope of economic globalization. India’s economic globalization’s practices have not offered any specific Oriental or Western model. D.P. Mukherjee (1942) is correct in affirming that “a sociological point of view reveals the silent process of social change going on beneath our prominent behavior.”¹⁰ Berger and Luckmann pointedly argue that social institutions do have a life of their own once they have been verified, but the total social order, called, “society” in the Parsonian sense, does not have the functional coherence attributed to it. It only seems so because individuals are disposed to see mostly patterns in any globalization practice.

Immanuel Wallerstein, thus, proposes a functionally coherent social system but that system is the “global capitalist world-system,” in which individual nations are not system but only subsystems in the expanded global context. His socio-spatial structure of global capitalism helps account for the kinds of phenomenon that gave rise to world-system analysis, but this anti-systemic movements in global trades achieved power only at the level of level of nation-states within the global capitalist economy. However, he fails to examine how human geography explores both the causes and consequences of the globalization process. In short, Andre Frank and Barry Gills argue that the current global political economy is mostly a continuation of the 5000-year-old “world-system” that emerged with the first states in Mesopotamia and subsequent state-based trade patterns.¹¹

2. Indian Economic Globalization and Targeted Philosophical Ideas

In Indian globalization, there were several targeted philosophical values directed toward philosophical underpinnings. First, the idea about the economic globalization was very much common in Indian philosophical mind, as testified to by the moralizing declaration in the ancient text, *Atharveda*, which declared, “My Earth, the goddess, she who bears her treasures stood up in many a place, gold, and riches.” *Kautilya’s Arthasastra* (fourth century B.C.) set up some strategies for international commerce, although they did not reflect actualities. The ancient *Amarakosha* declared that earned wealth gained by external trade “is capable of enjoyment.” Thus, international trade was visualized and practiced because of religious/philosophical urges. Indian wealth-seekers voiced that wealth constitutes of metal, that which is earned, that which is economic goodwill, ownership and that which is enjoyable, whereas modern globalists believe only in totality. In short, Indian philosophical mind-set sought for long economic globalization with a philosophical worldview. Here, language was the way by which the spirit realized itself through local languages. All these reveal that there is the persistent need for a philosophical interpretation of Indian economic globalization.¹² It was more than David Wilkinson’s “Central System” that argued that states took the initiative and then other non-state practices followed.

Second, in Indian trading pattern, global trade and commerce were widespread, though not extensive, from the early Middle Ages when Indian craftsmen, blacksmiths, and skilled rural jewelers enjoyed a social faith for producing goods to be sold outside the country both in the East and West. Historically, Indian early medieval period started from the 6th century A.D. to the 13th century A.D., and the late medieval period from the 13th to the 16th centuries, and in both periods inward looking Indian society did not make any transformative societal intensification. Based on political division, Burton Stein (*History of India*, 1998) refers to the “medieval” period from the Guptas to the invading Mughals to begin trade expansion that has been viewed as mundane commercial enterprises. As the Indian modern age began after the European trade expansion, ending with the beginning of the Mughal Empire in 1526 A.D., different social/political ethics affecting the commercial activity came into play. Arabia in the west of India was connected by sea for commercial enterprises, and inscriptions found in Kalinga “speak of navigation and ship commerce as forming part of the education of the prince of Kalinga.” A Chinese reporter wrote, “There was trade between India and China from 400 A.D. to 800 A. D.” The Hebrew words, *ahalim* or *ahaloth* for the fragrant wood was derived from the Tamil-Malayalam form of the word *aghil*.¹³ Some early epigraphic remains of Indian merchants in Egypt are sufficient to corroborate the flourishing trade between the Roman empire and southern India around the second century A.D.¹⁴ Indeed, for those facing the East Indian Ocean, many improved technologies intensified the degree of interconnection experienced in the region in which pre-colonial “archaic” form of globalization are well documented.¹⁵ However, undercurrent forces, including philosophy and ethics, have largely been ignored due perhaps to prevailing idea that philosophical ethics are not directly interconnected. In short, most of the economic explanations have minimized the relevance of “significant” cultural/philosophical aspects, which Intermingling with material interests constitute a forceful variation in the globalization’s causal factors.¹⁶

Third, early economic globalization, being an extension of relational dharma, illuminated the character of “co-genesis” via engaging awareness within the progression of ethical insight.¹⁷ Indeed, the geographic expansion of exchanges of goods, habits, ideas, and cultural patterns has not been interwoven with geography to present an adequate discourse about courses and causes. The

East-West divergence, as well as virtual total emphasis on material gains, has proven to be a provincial analytical tool in locating the comprehensive causes of economic globalization. However, there has been an avoidance of another tool, geography, which has been a vital component in commercial exchanges that highlighted the inner and outer limits of separate spaces and cultures apart from the hegemonic material perspective of “the center.” A benchmark for the economic globalization is rooted in value-oriented philosophy, ascribing to ethics, driven toward the good of all “stakeholders” in the global community of nations, but this analysis deals with generalized factors.¹⁸ The ancient Indian diplomat Kautilya (Arthashastra) has prescribed some general rules for conducting trade and commerce externally, but recent scholarship argues that he failed to prescribe specific prescriptions for globalization.¹⁹

Fourth, for a long period, Indian economic globalization demonstrated multivariate complexities. The dominant center-periphery thesis in economic globalization has mostly been presented as Marxist that presents the globalization process as a reflection of exploitation, which is a historical analysis. As historians have recorded that foreign traders including the Arab, Persian, Armenians, and Jewish, were usually called “sons-in-laws” in the Malabar Coast of India, and prominent historians, Thapar and Chanda, argued that the process in trade and commerce was “gene pool,” several historians began to adhere to the Indian philosophical attitude and motivational intersubjectivity, urging for intersubjective calculation to argue that these trade-related interactions take place at various level and time.²⁰ During the sixth century A.D., some Persian traders were permitted to establish churches in the ports of Male in Malabar and Calliana near Bombay.²¹ The philosopher Husserl clarifies that philosophical morality may act as transcendental inter-subjectivity which is concerned not so much with objects as with our manner of knowing objects. This inter-subjective trading practice views a self and a social morality which no longer requires situating itself with the current progressive narrative.²²

Fifth, philosophically, we may argue that reasoning could add substantially to our understanding of globalization, both as the generalized features and causative factors. Currently, features in capital and market forces ignore aspects of economic globalization that historically come into existence by generating socio-cultural

relations leading not only to de-territorialization.²³ In other words, this philosophical/cultural process was sustained by different political units within the same broader Indian business area.²⁴ Also, Eastern and Western philosophical perspectives interlinking commercial/cultural backgrounds need not be over-simplified.²⁵ Thomas Scheff accepts a given set of meanings of a term or situation implying a kind of sharing of subjective states.²⁶ However, although Husserl presents the empathy theory as the central default mode for understanding other agents, there are certain limitations in his conclusion that offers sound but the incomplete aspect of empathy as inter-subjectivity. For our current purpose, “empathy” is a key to sound relationships between two diverse worlds.²⁷ For Jean-Francois Lyotard, our social view of reality is really a narrative, a discourse rooted in consensus, which is an inter-subjective discourse. More directly, Jeanine A. Davis, of Interpersonal Institute in the US., calls this variety of transaction as a form of relational dharma that strengthens our mindset which organizes self and self-other development. This is our alternative theory in our relational interactions.²⁸ It is formed in an inter-connective opinion of different subjects seeking cooperation in communicative transaction. Although the philosopher Quine considers this as unfit in serious science, yet, in Indian philosophy of mindset it appears as intentionality toward acceptance of the proverbial “other.”

In sum, idealistic global citizenship, being a prime goal in wealth-generating economic globalization, speaks of an unjust world but refuses to think of the “alien others” as different and inferior species. In this vein, a South Indian trade scholar, K.R.V. Ayyar (2013), explains the scope of transaction in medieval commerce by writing, “our sailors and traders settled in far-off lands, establishing trading marts and colonies, which were as much of centers of exchange of culture as of merchandise.” For him, Indian traders in the past were not “freelance traders and explorers” but pioneers to open up a “network of organizations” to maintain amicable socio-commercial contacts in lands away from the vast Indian coast. The earlier norms in globalization as well as the reality of foreign traders living in India, many for a long period of time, challenged the notion that East and West were meaningful geo-historical categories and thus, the dominant East-West polarity in economic transaction and globalization lost its legitimacy.

3. Indian Globalization as Inter-subjectivity : Transaction of Goods and Services

In the Indian globalization model, inter-subjectivity in commercial expansion was transformed into material gains by way of “southernization” of Indian goods and practices in many parts of the world. Lynda Shaffer, of Tufts University, forcefully argues that the “southernization” process in international trade “was well under way” by the fifth century A.D. during the reign India’s Gupta dynasty (320-535 A.D.) and the process was spreading to China and the Muslim Caliphate as well, and then to the Mediterranean Christians by the year 1200 A.D. She adds that with further trade with Europe and its colonies, the process of “southernization.” Among the trading goods, cotton, earlier “domesticated” during the Indus Civilization, was sent out as commercial; commodities to the Middle East during the fifth century A.D. and Southeast Asia during the sixth century A.D. A historian rightfully claims that “India virtually clothed the world by the mid-eighteenth century.” By about 400 A.D., Malay sailors could be found two-thirds of the way around the world, from Eastern Island to East Africa.²⁹ It is noteworthy to know that in the Gupta period during the Middle Ages, Indian fleets were capable of defending the “sea-girt” coastal regions on India and increase trade with other countries. A special category of Indian trader was known as *Sartha*. This special group had been defined as “the group of travelers (*Amarakosa*) who invested their capital. *Sartha* meant “merchants who invested equal amount of trade capital, and who carried on trade with “outside market” traveling in a trade caravan. Those who joined the trade caravan were governed by their own rules and trade regulations.

Viewed from geographical intersubjectivity in Indian globalization, as examined by K.N. Chaudhuri, can be viewed as part of Asian industrial production, especially in textiles metals, glass, and ceramics, providing the thesis in central-place theory that explains the dominance of iron and steel production in India and China, silk production in the Yangzi River Valley, and cotton industry in the Punjab, Gujrat, the Coromandel Coast and eventually in the eastern coast in Bengal. Cross-cultural trade thus demonstrated the beginning and development of “industrial foundation.”³⁰ This commercial network could be well achieved by means of planned philosophical theme, argues Krishnadeva Raya,

who was the Emperor of the vast Vijayanagar Empire during the medieval period in South India. He prescribed in writing more than 285 rules to conduct state business and overseas commercial transactions. His Rule #258 prescribed, "Make the merchants of distant foreign countries who import elephants and good horses, attached to yourself by providing them with village and decent dwellings in the city, by affording them daily audience, presents and allowing decent profits."³¹ Ronald Robertson of University of Pittsburgh argues that "globalization theory partly rests on a pre-theoretical commitment" to global heterogeneity to emphasize on societal as well as "civilizational" ethics.³² This civilizational hybridization worked toward a causative factor as fixed identities moved to global interactive places. Inter-subjectivity has been cultural de-territorializing of usual economic practices. Being partly hybridization, the feature has been influenced by invisible social actors who have often been indeterminate.

The essence of inter-subjectivity is based on the idea that there may be disagreement regarding economic globalization and yet it can certainly be objective. There is disagreement about the meaning of death and yet that would not by itself indicate that there are no objective moral realities. Assumption that the inference from intersubjective agreement to probable objective truth is strong. In Plato's interpretation, the greatest reality is not absolute truth, but systematic "ideas" of "forms." Forms are the defining characteristics of things. The form "beauty" is what it is to be beautiful. This is objective reality. For Aristotle, ordinary objects of sense experience are the most objective reality. For Descartes, it is "I think, therefore I am." This kind of inter-subjectivity was originally visualized by the philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) as interchange of ideas, thoughts, and feelings, a kind of consciousness. These inter-subjective objects are reflected in concept of international trade and commerce. In a sense, Western and Indian communities view the world with similar bodies, but with different languages that determine the ways in which the world is felt and later, understood. What is clear that temporal conceptions, which will be extremely influential in the elaboration of physical scientific discourses, is also mediated by cultural anchors, illuminating the mechanisms of philosophical underpinning of material globalization.³³

Inter-subjectivity in societal ethics was more than the "capability" approach of A. Sen (1933) and M. Nussbaum

(community variety), or Adam Smith's (1723-1790) "sympathy" in international trade relations. For R.C. Majumdar (1937), an authority on early Indian trade, especially in commercial/territorial expansion in Southeast Asia, inter-subjective of "Indian merchants" were expressed both in mental calculation and mundane motives as they established trade settlements in Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, and other precious lands in Southeast Asia. As opposed to the focused attention, K.N. Chaudhury writing on commerce on South Asian lands, Andre Frank on South and East Asia, and Anthony Reid on Southeast Asia and other scattered places in Southeast Asia go beyond usual Eurocentric approach in the analysis of global trading activity. In his relatively short book (2001), Philip E. Steinberg has succeeded in explaining the "social and historical nature of people's past and present" as well as conceptualizations of the sea, as a "space," which is after all 71 percent of our planet. He emphasizes that even the most distant ocean is a deliberate socio-space-based construction of society, not necessarily by society.[i] Both Ferdinand Braudel (1966) and Anthony Reid (1988) observe that although traders and rulers were eager to exchange goods for profit, there was an underlying effort to adhere to "collective destinies," a kind of moralizing globalizing thought

Indian variety of Buddhism became a universal faith to attract great numbers of people in India and abroad, and as Chinese silk business gave rise to skilled craftsmen, another variety of inter-subjective ethos began to influence the traders in India and abroad. Chinese silk called *Gangapatta* entered India for exchange with items available in India. Moreover, the famous *Geniza* trade papers (1000-1300 A.D.) describe a major hub of Jewish trading operations based in Aden, and another major port in Yemen, simultaneously connecting these trading posts to the western coast on India. On his return from the Malabar Coast, the Jewish trader, Allan, brought 72 bales of iron, 150 sacks of valued peppers and spices to Western coast of India. His written business letters affirm the existence of good "legal procedures" and related government care for the foreigners in Kulum (Quilon), "the southernmost port on the Malabar Coast. From the first and second century A.D., textile goods were already supplied to coastal towns in Mediterranean coast and East African coastal trading ports. An art historian known as Agnes Geijer provides evidentiary proofs about the dyed and painted cotton items of "Indian origin" to be sold in some parts of

Europe before 1500 A.D. By the mid-eighteenth century, A.D., India virtually “clothed the world,” although statistics about the quantity as well profit/loss were never determined. Excavations at the port of Siraf, a noted port on the Persian Gulf coast of Iran, about 220 kilometers south of Siraf, have revealed a thriving trade city surrounded by desert, whose wealth depended exclusively on international trade, especially “India Trade,” between 8th and 12th centuries A.D. Jerry H. Benteley (1998), emphasizes that political and commercial structures influenced individual lives and social organization throughout the eastern hemisphere.

These narratives stand for overall social ethics, in the mode of inter-subjectivity, which contains a diversity of theories and beliefs to demonstrate the difference between weak social constructionism and strong social constructionism, arguing that the “real” is not just a matter of ordinary social convention; it is for societal action in business. It is interesting to observe that during the Mauryan rule, 4th-3rd century B.C., Indian trading voyages in the Indian Ocean became part of the more general development in which sailors and petty merchants of different nationalities “began to knit together” the land borders of the Southern ocean,” a Chinese term referring to all waters from South China Sea to the shore of East Africa. Later, this process of Indian trade progression has been characterized as “Southernization” of Sino-Indian commercial expansion that has been characterized by Andrew G. Frank and others as an economically unified world as part of universal economy.

4. Varieties in Inter-subjective Themes : Economic Globalization

Inter-subjectivity, as defined by Thomas Scheff, is acceptance of a given set of meanings of a term or situation, a kind of sharing of subjective states.³⁵ In these instances, inter-subjectivity as a philosophical consciousness seems to be different from domestic communities sharing a social experience that transcends any particular subjectivity. Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, observes that empathy may well be observed as a bridge between the personal and the shared, the self and the others. However, although Husserl presents the empathy theory as the central default mode for understanding other agents, there are certain limitations in his conclusion that offer sound but incomplete

aspects of empathy as inter-subjectivity. For our current purpose, “empathy” is a key to sound relationships between two diverse worlds.³⁶ Perhaps the post-modernist philosophers such as Jean-Francois Lyotard are correct to argue that our social view of reality is really a narrative, a discourse rooted in consensus, which is an inter-subjective discourse. Jeanine A. Davis, of Interpersonal Institute in the US., calls inter-subjectivity as a form of relational dharma that strengthens our mind-set which organizes self and self-other development. This is our alternative theory, she adds, in our relational interactions.³⁷ It formed in an inter-connective opinion of different subjects seeking cooperation in communicative transaction. Although the philosopher Quine considers this as unfit in serious science, yet, in Indian philosophy of mind-set it appears as intentionality toward acceptance of the proverbial “other.” Idealistic global citizenship, being a prime goal in wealth-generating economic globalization, speaks of unjust world but refuses to think of the “alien others” as different and inferior species. In this vein, a South Indian trade scholar, K.R.V. Ayyar (2013), explains the scope of Indian inter-subjectivity in transaction in medieval commerce by writing, “our sailors and traders settled in far-off lands, establishing trading marts and colonies, which were as much of centers of exchange of culture as of merchandise.” For him, Indian traders in the past were not “freelance traders and explorers” but pioneers to open up a “network of organizations” to maintain amicable socio-commercial contacts in lands away from the vast Indian coast.

This inter-subjective economic globalization and wider cooperation, being part of traditional Indian values, was later on highlighted by the Nobel Laureate poet, Rabindranath Tagore, who popularized the theme that the Aryan, non-Aryan, the Dravidian, Huns, the Pathans and the Moguls, all “merged here in one body.” “Arenas of culture and trade” were pressed into influential foundation of inter-subjective themes in transaction of goods and values (B.P. Singh, 1998). This aspirational goal is cultural spatialization in which people act in relation, not to brute reality, but to culture specific modes of perceiving and organizing the wider world. In other words, Indian globalizing ethics in various forms embeds a normative vision involving interdependence, equity, and cooperation, addressing transboundary and common practical social issues. Of course, there was never a fixed “Golden Rule,” whether

positively or negatively formulated. Arjun Appadurai appropriately characterizes this type of motivated economic activity in terms of disjunctive flows of people, capital, technology, and ideologies in which cultural materials cross borders at a rapid rate. His argument is that global religious practices are a dynamic set of processes which constantly seeking out new connections by way of inter-subjectivity. Here, the modern sense of isolated self leaves us with the sense of emptiness and the need for meaning.³⁸

Indeed, inter-subjectivity in the context of globalization has been characterized by Moti Chandra, in his book, *Trade and Trade Routes* (1977), as hidden “historical facts” and “methodology” to recover from the history of Indian trade pattern up to “the Eleventh Century.” Kenneth Hall, in his book, *Trade and State Craft* (1980) affirms that the Chola rulers in South India exchanged trade commodities, pearls, areca-nuts, spices, and cotton products, obtained from the interior to sell to the traders in Southeast Asia to add “vitality from its interaction with others.” The unique combination of Indian cultural geography and value-oriented globalism had generated a new interpretation of economic globalization. Early economic globalism in India, had all the hallmarks of profit mentality and yet economic historians observe that should and ought to perform interactions in certain contexts. Social norms, which are less than compulsive human experiences, help or even urge us to align with others, and thus, can become part of predictable “social order.”³⁹ Arjun Appadurai is more focused as he argues that in economic globalism there are dynamic sets of values that constantly change to seek new material connections. There are trans-national overlapping values attached to globalization.⁴⁰

In sum, settled agricultural societies of China, India, and Southwest Asia were engaged in long-distance trade that was voluminous to shape the course of industrial production during the early medieval eras. This process of trade and commerce minimized Wallerstein’s “world-system” conception, which was more concerned with economic capitalism. As Robertson argues, there is a need for emphasis on relevant specific social/philosophical rules, as applied to causative aspect, cutting across the conventional discourse about East/West cleavage (Max Weber, Dumont, and Nelson) in various contexts.⁴¹ In philosophical discourse, inter-subjective “consciousness” could be regraded “as a quality of only the body as a

substantive whole and not of the numerous parts.” Philosophic linguistic communication presupposes an abiding knower, for understanding the meaning of a sentence requires the synthesis of the word-meanings grasped in succession.⁴² In Indian philosophical causal connection between a generalized worldview and a specific belief system, there is an inter-subjective presumption which stipulates that there is unification of subjective perception. For instance, in Director Raj Kapoor’s celebrated movie song, “*Mera Jhootha (shoes) hai Japani,*” meaning that Indian slippers are Japanese and hats are Russian, but my heart is Indian” appears to be an interaction between inner/outer vision (Partha Chatterjee), whereas for Homi Bhabha, this acceptance of different value systems are instances of a hybrid norm (Homi Bhabha). In Indian version economic globalization is realism. For the Vaisesikas, this form of interaction is “realism” across the board. For Gayatri Chakravorty, this ideal representation is nothing but “realism.”⁴³ In short, these apparently innumerable ethical values that enjoy nearly universal agreement across Indian culture and across many periods of time are motivating material factors in Indian trade and commerce beyond her porous borders.

5. Contrast : Modern Trading Practices and Indian Philosophical Values in Economic Globalization

In contrast to the current material gains via trade, several religious texts in India prescribed for monetary gains and ethical satisfaction via expansive commerce, an ancient goal of Goddess Laxmi. During the Middle Ages, the South Indian Krishnadeva Raya, who ruled the Vijayanagar kingdom, prescribed that the royal superiors should encourage the improvement of ports, where “merchants of distant foreign countries who import elephants and good horses by providing them with villages and decent dwelling in the city,” for profits.⁴⁴ Those who lived in the world of ideas and the practice of policy design and implementation “a new philosophy” can help simplify the “diversification of globalization’s meaning for those who have diverted from many aspects of economic globalization. Bertrand Russell argues, there is “a No Man’s Land,” between religious dogma and secular idea of trade and commerce. There is thus a need for speculation for redefining the ethical scope of globalization.⁴⁵ Several sacred texts sought moral principles

including honest trade dealings and basic humane norms in preaching the cause of globalization. Passages from the Vayu Purana (fifth century B.C.) and Ramayana (third century B.C.) inform us that both spiritual and material urges motivated the Indian merchant; here “Death of distance” was the goal in foreign trade and commerce-building. The idealist commercial goal was depicted in these terms: every product is made up of only three things: first, raw material such as cotton and spices; second, the knowledge to construct a finished commodity like boat; and last, inner production urges supposed to satisfy the inner value code derived from social/philosophical ethos. It is interesting to observe that an archaeologist Miller meticulously reconstructed a linkage between artificial materials and core cultural values of the Indus Valley peoples determined the core cultural values shaping goods produced. Indeed, Vosner, argues that Indian spiritual values partly determined the trade goods for long distance trade.

Indeed, medieval Indian rulers were engaged in international commerce. The Chola navies (200 A.D. to 1279 A.D.) conquered Srivijaya to have it as the largest Maritime Empire in Southeast Asia. Along with this expansion, Indian goods, being part of foreign trade and wider maritime activity, started the process of “Indianization” of the wider trading world. Indianization was to some extent was feasible and possible due to introduction of Indian goods in Southeast Asia, which had commodities highly desirable to Indian traders, and thus gave the destined a new name, Suvarnabhumi, meaning “Land of gold,” away from the peninsula, or perhaps parts of Burma. From the first century A.D., Greek traders from the Mediterranean learned the periodic nature of the monsoon winds and how to use them to sail to India, and beyond for commercial purposes. Meanwhile, the Chinese built enormous “junks” to travel international waters for trade, and thus, interconnection with the Middle East and China, linked the Bay of Bengal, Southeast Asia, and China. Southeast Asia was massively connected by Indian high culture from the early Middle Ages, in ways that is still visible today. Modern development specialists call these trade development processes as “conditional convergence,” indicating that reasonably organized state system linking sea-lanes and major markets could generate profitable business investments, an idea very much ingrained in Indian ethics in profit-seeking by trade expansion.

The concept was spelled as “conditional convergence” which was present among the Indian international traders, who were encouraged to gather wealth. The concept of the spirit of Lakshmi and her association with material fortune and good was significant enough that Atharvada texts mention this in multiple volumes. In most sacred texts, Lakshmi connotes the good, an auspicious sign for material prosperity, because desire for wealth is a quality that is supported by substance in wealth to be obtained by commerce, national and international. Thus, Lakshmi evolves into a complex concept with plural manifestations. In economic globalization factors, such as gold, valued goods, and currency of various sorts had been immediate causal factors, having the deep ethical mind-set because of Indian adherence to behavioral ethics that paid adequate constructive attention to alien “others,” including the yavanas (socially undesirable) beyond the proverbial and prohibited *kala pani* (black water) both in the eastern and southern borders of the Indian ill-defined subcontinent. Profit mentality of Indian early traders could easily be traced as testified by a South India’s king who declared his mission statement expressed as “Lakshmi (goddess of wealth) deserts Hari, her own husband, if he is without wealth.” This search for wealth guided the king, an adventurous trader, to reach *Ratnadvipa* (proverbial land of wealth and gold in the south), with a religious slogan, *jaya, jaya* (victory in mind). The king, as a small trader, conquered poisonous snakes and carnivorous animals to reach unknown island, *Ratnadvipa* to expand trade and obtain more wealth. The *Jatakas* and Jain works showed the significance of sea trade to reach the shores of current Sri Lanka, whereas Indian traders in Canton, southern China, built three Brahmanical temples where Indian traders also could live. Without reducing cultural choices to decisions taken out of purely private and group material interests, it is possible to argue that the large-scale cultural exchanges and trade transactions reflected Indian political, social, and economic calculations along with the appeal to the religious traditions themselves. A motivating factor here was concerned with providing a framework of “cosmopolitan” factors in social practices, considered within the groups in economic exchanges.⁴⁶

Societies that had been integrated into Arabia, parts of the Middle East, and beyond that to East Africa and eventually to Southern Africa from Mother India eventually would constitute an invaluable source of labor, culminating in “indenture labor.” An

inter-oceanic perspective on the Indian oceanic parts from the pre-Christianity eras revealed the deepening involvement of various societies in the “India Trade” area. What Max Weber was not able to see was that the advancement of science and modernity does not reduce the scope of the older unknown world, but only increases our awareness of the global world.⁴⁷ Rational solutions to identification issues have not reduced our sense of incompleteness. Polanyi demonstrates how external trade, exchange of money, and markets originated independently of one another, and then, how they became fused with the self-regulating market system, leading to wider globalization of trade and money. Market exchange and commercial became exactly synonymous.⁴⁸

Although Indian traders in earlier periods were not well-liked for some social reasons, the Pali canonical literature during the medieval period depicted that traders in India generally were persons of “noble lineage of pedigree” (*ukkatthakama*), belonging to *khattiyas*, brahmanas, *gahapatis*, and as such, deserved social respect, and thus, could form “close linkages” between the pious Buddhist monk and itinerant merchant, and this healthy interaction helped the spread of Buddhism in different parts of South Asia, Central Asia and Southeast Asia. Likewise, there were close relationship between traders from Persian Gulf port of Hormuz and Hindu traders in western part of medieval India. “Hindu” merchants at Somnath in Gujrat patronized the construction of a Muslim mosque at Somnath. A unique bilingual inscription in Arabic and Sanskrit offers considerable “details of the social and cultural scenario at Somnath,” which was also a great center of Saivism in Gujrat in the early Middle Ages.⁴⁹ So, in the Middle Ages, traders were not portrayed as outcastes on the fringes of land society. There were many instances when sea-traders and individuals were granted agency to the community of seafarers who went abroad to begin international trade and commerce. Ocean space proved to a new avenue for economic globalization. More directly, Ayyar adds, “if a foreign merchant, who does not know the ways of the country applies to them and entrusts his goods to them, they will take charge of these and sell them in the most loyal manner.”⁵⁰

Contrast between idealistic values and material gains were expressed in terms of economic globalization. It is interesting to observe that the North Indian “high culture” (of the Brahmins) spread to South India and Sri Lanka, by a combination of luxury

trade and the formative stepping stone of Buddhist and Jain monasteries, brahmin settlements as well as Hindu temples, the acceptance of North Indian Court style, and the adoption of artistic and scientific culture of an emerging classical courtly culture. This internal globalization mode was equally influenced by Chinese goods and culture. Indian culture, brought by trade and commerce, was consumed by South East Asians in a selective way. Nevertheless, South Indian gods, Murugan, got identified with the Hindu divinities of Puranas, e.g., Kumara, son of Shiva. Although the age of Indianized states began to decline for varied reasons in the fourteenth century A.D., after nearly a millennium and half, a substantial “afterglow” on Indian-influenced arts and religions remains in living cultural transmission to Southeast Asia, and Ceylon.⁵¹ Liberating internal businesses, the flow of goods, capital, labor, cultural patterns found acceptable norms in commercial activity beyond the borders, being “interwoven with political strategies and discourses.”⁵² There was necessarily a social element to reconstruct a conceptual structure that has responded with intelligence and social/economic norms that are necessarily interlinked and obviously formed the foundational pillars in commercial activity. Indeed, meta-geographical categories, from continents to civilizations, are inadequate frameworks for the description of economic globalization because economic globalization is more than a catchword, and its cultural ethics have always been rooted to many vital pillars of globalization, including economic. Since the “macro-cultural map” is but a stepping-stone toward a serviceable picture of Indian economic globalization from the Middle Age. A targeted value that a dominant type of organization and technique could offer the society or the people, in the mold of trading inter-connectedness, appearing as the societal norm.⁵³

In short, Indian economic globalization “took place before the modern process of high globalization, thereby “a distinct niche” has articulated a unifying philosophical theme with many local practices that had its own specific patterns”.⁵⁴ As Jack Goody affirms, traders of Asia and Africa did not look for “global opportunity for the spread of colonialism,” knowing that European power like Spain and Portugal were poor in comparison of the non-European in the fifteenth century. The study of international trade, argues the Bengali trade scholar, Ranabir Chakrabarti (2001), was not inherently for occupation of

territories, even in the creation of so-called “Little India” in Asia.⁵⁵ A kind of “illumination” would reconcile Islamic doctrine with older Greek reconciliation process) and gave Sufism a measure of intellectual respectability, and this kind of illumination became an intellectual development in medieval Europe and India. European mercantilism did not aim at the prosperity of an entire population in Europe but gave rise to the need for close contact and some arranged cooperation. Virtually in every trade transaction in Indian medieval trade transaction abroad, there were obvious ethical values implied and applied. Indian civilizational ethics stand against the minimum interaction, and call for wider spread of trade, based on the that every product is made up of three things: raw materials such as cotton, spices; specific knowledge to make finished products such as boats, and making a new product at make a difference. The process corresponds to the philosophical reasoning of Vasundhara (4th century A.D.), and earlier philosopher Chandrakiriti (8th century B.C.), who argued that “the atom consists of a multitude of distinct blades” of grass with well embedded staples, conforming to the traditional argument that a part must transform to the whole by virtue of astronomer Bhaskar’s thesis that declared that a belief in , thereby establishing a thesis that there must be a progressive philosophical mobility toward adjustment with economic globalization.

6. Supportive Cultural/Philosophic Pillars : Globalization Spirit

An ancient explanation of why some countries take up commerce and others do not is the differing resource endowments. Anthony Giddens’ (1990, 1991), writing about the post-traditional nature of society, argues that there is a “third way” which represents progressive social democracy that seeks to avoid Marxist rigid analysis and the errors of neo-liberalism, adding that an appropriate means is to seek a more humane world, a kind of social habits. He refers to “affect” which interacts with the world in a multisensory engaged way. This variety of globalizing urge was so keen that the South Indian merchants in the early medieval era organized international trade guilds which accepted traders from other countries (nanadesis). Citing the economic historian Jain, a Tamil economist, Kanagassbapathi (2007) shows us as to how the foreign merchants preferred to do business with Indians due to their

value-based business practices. In these instances, varieties of philosophical ethics guided several specific actions in economic globalization. Several features are observable.

First, Childe submits, expansive material and cultural developments were visible in Sumatra, Java, and other islands. Mahayana Buddhism spread along the trade routes of Central Asia from Indian northern borders to mainland China. The process of globalization meant global fusion and dissemination of mother country's ideals and practices. However, local people in Southeast Asia and China did not always adhere to the "Great tradition" of India, but as Philip Curtin argues, trade-linked people in the Horn of Africa had been more thoroughly influenced by trade links than the people in the East. Indian trade with far-away Indonesia introduced cultural stories such as the idealist stories of King Rama and Queen Sita of the ancient epic. Thus, a kind of "Greater India," or "Little India" could be found in the daily life of Singapore and Malaysia.⁵⁶ Two forms of social alignment, alignment with others and with the group impersonally form the basis of human norms and prosocial habits.⁵⁷ The idea of unacceptable yavanas, meaning foreigners, did not persist for long. Some writers argue that the yavanas referring to Westerners and other foreigners brought gold to buy pepper, on the Kerala coast, and returned with Indian pepper. The Denukata trade-port on the Western Coast was visited by yavanas. But some trade historians counter-argue that because Denukata was a center of international trade, there was no bad feeling against the yavanas. However, Sir Mortimer Wheeler does not agree that the yavanas were necessarily Greek-speaking foreigners, because during the early times of the Christian era, the word yavana or Yonka was used in reference to certain Indians, probably originating the Indo-Greek kingdom into the north. He further affirms that apart from the secondary use of the word, the yavanas and yonakas of Indian literature "are normally Westerners in the fullest meaning of the term." He concludes that the yavanas as sailors were mostly Greeks and Arabs. What is without any confusion is that the ships of Roman type were used in the "India trade" by Egyptian merchants.⁵⁸ The historian John Keay argues that Yavanas were eventually awarded *vratya* caste status in India.

Second, in the Indian Western coast trade became in Quesney's term, "surplus value" which would add to wealth, an ancient

trader's goal. For Mill, this variety on commerce became wealth in modern economy. In the text of *Amarkosa*, wealth included *dravya*, metal or currency, a kind of property for *bhoga* or enjoyable item. A fifth-century A.D. painting found in Vaishali depicted a picture of Sri Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth. One Nuruddin Piruz, a Muslim trader was given permission by a Hindu king called Rajakula Sri Chadda to set up a mosque for the local and incoming traders on the Western Coast, all these was meant to be wealth-generating transaction. Traders began to use various languages including Arabic, Gujarati, Tamil, and even Bengali as mediums of trade expression. These were not mythological tales but language of international commerce that generated "wealth" the original desire of Goddess Lakshmi.⁵⁹ These factors proved to be causative agents.

Third, the English and American line of causative factors in economy have mostly been linked with the linkage between liberalizing Protestant growth ethics and secular Enlightenment's moral values. During the age of aggressive colonialism, the economic globalization's causal connections turned into the designed linkage between Westernization/modernization and the older Eastern social/religious norms. These causal explanations remained mostly sub-alternization of the neutral center, asking, "Can the subaltern speak"? K.N. Chaudhuri, the noted Indian economic historian, has been critical of Euro-centric perspectives in describing social values, whereas Edward Said and Samir Amin and others observe the undue dominance of Western ideas and methodologies as "oppressive." Nevertheless, the necessary cause or condition without which an effect cannot occur has been explained. Certain conditions or causes are to be present to bring about desired results, knowing that the presence of the necessary cause is not always enough to predict. How do we explain the necessary causal connection between ethical codes and subsequent course of a certain action?

Fourth, the mind-body linkage has been justified by both the West and the East. Advocates of soul-body conversation argue that human beings always think while their soul and body are united. In G.W. Leibniz's (1971) interpretation, this unity is called soul-body parallelism. In Indian Nyaya philosophy, the unity appears as perception having two elements, *savikalpa* (constructed) and *nirvikalpa pratyakasa* (non-constructed) perceptions. Seeing a cow is non-constructed perception but perceiving a cow as being a cow is

constructed. This interconnected duality of human perception becomes a worldview for the Nobel Laureate Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) who argues that cultural particularism and pluralism become “human universalism” as applied to perception. This interconnected “civilization,” being perception, “usually develops a complex economy along with equally complex sciences and technologies.”

Fifth, the modern “Teen Murti” school in New Delhi has been concerned with “Indic civilization” rather than just India (Kumar and Chandhoke, 2000), seeking a connection between the ancient and modern Evolutionary economics and institutional changes were always as part of economic dynamics; the ancient value systems training links between Yunnan, Burma, and India go back to 200 B.C. Arik Dirik, challenging Samuel Huntington’s “clash on civilization,” argues that relations were not just of cultural/commercial rivalry but also “collaboration.”⁶⁰ Bal Krishen Thapar (1992) and Andre Gunder Frank (1966) have taken historical analysis beyond capitalism as a central explanatory category. Ulrich de Balbian observes different signs of inter-subjectivity as an alternative reality, highlighting the role of consciousness as intra-and inter-atoms, finding the relevance of “interculturality.”⁶¹ Often Indian spiritual cultural appeal appealed to cosmopolitan variety which was expressed by poets and nationalists. India’s first Nobel Laureate, Rabindranath Tagore (1929-1941) wrote, “The great God-Vishnu spoke to me, and Spoke Uma, ten-armed Goddess; Make ready thy boat, carry the rites of our worship across the unknown sea.” This stanza, written in Bavaria on August 21, 1927, reminded the Indian nationalists that English commercial/industrial complex business had hurt Indian produce. This kind of swadeshi appeal was echoed by an Arabian scholar of creative arts, Amr Bahr al-Jahir (776-868) who observed that Indian traders had “ethical standards” in conducting business.⁶² However, this idealist global thought did not go well with the majority of scholars.

Sixth, the general commercial term, “India trade,” was used during the Middle Ages for years in various contexts. The word “India trade” goes back to the days of the Bible where it was said that Hiram, the king of Tyre sent ships of “Tarshis to Ophir for apes, ivory, and peacocks” to decorate the palaces and temple of king Solomon. It seems all those items were indigenous to India. Indeed, from the First Century A.D. a new pattern of trade was in use to

shape governing the terms of international trade between India and the Mediterranean.⁶³ The term was used by the Greeks, the Persians, the Arabs, and the Chinese to denominate wider Indian culture as well as general civilization. In sociology, culture refers to ideas, habits, a type of total heritage of a society. Its past was brought into relation to the pasts of other societies, including the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Greeks, and Persians. As the ultimate "Orient" of classical European geography, territorial "India" expanded with each new discovery throughout the expansive European Renaissance until it encompassed in some usages, the major part of the globe. Ortelius's 1570 map of India, for instance, included entire modern-day South, East, and Southeast Asia.⁶⁴ Here China and India denoted not states but cultural groupings. "India trade" was possible due to the trade-resources available in India since the earliest of time. Ibn Battuta, the 14th century Moorish traveler during the Delhi Sultanate period saw teeming markets in the Gangetic plains. Duarte Barbosa, a Portuguese official in Cochin in the early sixteenth century described Gujrat as the leading cotton trade center. Malabar in Kerala had colored cloth material. Transactions were largely controlled by government. Sultan Alauddin asked the government officials to check on impropriety. India had a favorable balance of trade for long. Since voyages were made only in good weather, a rudimentary shelter sufficed as a harbor, otherwise the hulls were dragged ashore. Machilipatnam situated on a small branch of the Krishna River, was considered as "having a harbor," in the eighteenth century, Mahfuz Bandar, the port, on the Vamsadhara River, was continually frequented by boats which came from the coast, and in 1711, in the Ganjam River, which is inaccessible, there were "three-mastered vessels grounded on the beach," etc. more.⁶⁵

Last, although Central Asian arts and thoughts bear the influence of several regions which found their way to the region, it was Buddhism and other Indian ideas came to Central Asia along Buddhism that contributed most to the development of the Central Asian art and culture. The discovery of religious cultural relics from Central Asian culture testified to the spread of Indian cultural history. Buddhism in Southern China from the Fourth Century A.D. testified to a regular flow of Indian monks to China, who devoted to the translation of Buddhist texts and propagation of Buddhism; many Chinese monks also came to India.⁶⁶ The cross-cultural aspiration was found in East African commerce. Eastern Africa played a significant

role in "India trade." This East African coastal trade expanded to Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa resulting in further economic globalization during the second half of the Nineteenth Century. Indian traders, including "two Indian brokers" followed trade procedure like the procedure in transaction found in Jeddah. However, the noted city of Harar, the Muslim trading center of eastern Ethiopia, had its Indian commercial contacts. One of its Amirs, Ahmad bin Abu Bakr (1852-1866), was described by the explorer burton as sitting on "a common Indian Kursi, raised cot, about five feet long, with back and sides supported by a dwarf railing, while several of the leading Harari traders travelled to India. Three more traders visited Bombay. Such trade contacts with India were intensified by Ethiopian Emperor Menelik's occupation of Harar in 1887, and eventually there grew up an Indian bazaar in Harar.⁶⁷ Indian furniture was at times imported into Ethiopia as a luxury item. The French traveler Soleillet reported that in the south-western land, local ruler called the were Moti of Jemma used his throne a sculptured wooden bed engraved with silver, and had beside him a similar large wooden chair, both of which were believed to have been crafted by Indian craftsmen.⁶⁸ In sum, if we accept the theory that the triangular slave trade, the Asia trade, and the Far Eastern were all an integrated trading pattern, then the question remains: Were Indian slave traders responsible for the expansion of slave trade for pure commerce and profit. How do we justify the slave trade with Central Asia with any moral frame? One theory has been that the then failing French India Company was bound to do trade in slaves for the need of direct access to cowry shells and Indian textiles.⁶⁹ We know well that the institutional slavery was accepted by traditional social norms (*Artha-sastra*, *Manu-smriti*, and *Mahabharata*), and do we accept that only Muslim rulers in the medieval India were responsible of the expansive slave trade in which brown-colored, not blacks, were sold, especially in the Middle East? What were the motives and justification of the merchants, scholars, religious figures, and Muslim invaders? Some authorities suggest that slave markets in Central Asia was largely a product of the state-building attempts of the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire. The enslavement of Hindus and their exportation to Central Asia continued throughout the Mughal period; was it to punish the Hindu rebels? Indeed, we need to generate the integrated, multi-disciplinary historical analysis in early modern Indian subcontinent in which we can move from one discipline to several others.

7. Conclusion

Alasdair MacIntyre argues that each tradition “has its own standards and measures of interpretation, explanation, and justification internal to itself,” obviously meaning that there are not shared standards in interpretation.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, as Ibn Battuta, the great Arab traveler from Tangier (1324) found that the western Gujrati city of Cambay had the “cosmopolitan” character, and, as such, foreign merchants in the Middle Ages found a friendly commercial atmosphere in which traders of various faiths cooperated in the work of global trade.⁷¹ However, cosmopolitanism was shaped in various forms depending on the local socio-political philosophy. In the West, Christianity as global religion has molded the character of relationship between the West and the Rest, whereas Paul Hirst and Grahame Thomson (2002) have traced a “new global system” rather than “inter-national” trade system, which could be viewed in anthropological vein as social relationship that acted as submerged interacting social relationship. Such narratives might not have philosophical views. In most instances there has been the presentation of economic globalization as the relationship between philosophical mode of the state and the economic people. The world of trade and commerce moved from a condition where language such as global trade was employed in India in many different contexts, geographical, social, religious, and cultural settings. At the center of economic globalization, Indian Ocean trade routes connected places from the East Africa and the southwestern ports of Japan on the other end, and connections were largely influenced by a philosophical worldview by going beyond metaphysical divide between modernism and tradition, and East and West. A growing idea of economic globalization was spoken in India as the spiritual destiny without the negative connotation of modern manifest destiny. Several interconnected interpretations put emphasis on the causative factors in Indian philosophical view of economic globalization, and that is the essence of my article.

First, although undercurrent normative power became a network of interacting forces, being goal-driven, relational, and inner motivated, creating less tensions between different trading groups. Because it was not context-specific, it could add cross-fertilization. In scattered “India trade” links, “for instance, there was the possibility of superseding the dominant elements of

early German type of racial nationalistic philosophy that turned into Marxist one-dimensional economic “determinism” to explain why people so similar at the base and yet so different in their philosophical expression. At the present juncture of time, when various conclusions in cultures are in the process of being more and more closely interlinked, it seems desirable for all of us to “have lived from the beginning of the world” in that fashion.⁷² As Akhil Gupta of Stanford University argues, the residents of the civilizations around the Indian Ocean in the Middle Ages and early modern world were already cosmopolitan even by the standards of high modern age. This “cosmopolitanism” was helpful in bringing about wider one-world in economic sense. Moreover, like the Western metaphysical speculations about the cosmos and the man’s place within it, Indian philosophers and secular authors made central use of the concepts of cause, *karana*, to develop a sophisticated coherent theory of causation of globalization. The Buddhist system has been based on thoughtful observation outside the earthly thinking and the inner workings of mental calculation. Inter-subjective trade and commerce has several interconnected aspects, arguing that globalization has ethical supportive connections with actual development. Dharma is the unique ontological relationship that a thing has to the rest of the world of relationships in this world. Of course, in this worldview the concept of individual right was absent.⁷³ In this interpretation when people interact, they do so with the understanding that their respective perceptions of reality are interconnected with other normative values. Being social constructions, they exist only because people tacitly agree to act as if they exist in consciousness.⁷⁴ For Professor Sebastian Vlassery, the question of “the other” speaks of the need for the essential interrelation with the other.⁷⁵

Second, this so-called “free trade,” following the proverbial monsoon wind, created diverse trading patterns in and around several ports on the western Indian coast, in which inland traders made significant connections through kinship, religion, and local trade network. “Dhow Cultures” of the Indian Ocean demonstrate the “cosmopolitan” feature of India trade. An author argues that the term *dhow* an overreaching category which included many kinds of trading vessels although the triangular lateen sail was a defining feature. There were several innovative features in the trade navigation. Traders navigated between Kilwa in East Africa and

Calicut and Malacca in western India.⁷⁶ The west India trade produced a development of cosmopolitanism and nationalism among the India traders in East Africa, and eventually emphasized “multicultural hybridity.”⁷⁷ As a result, Indian societies changed and grew by transforming from within and adapted to pressures as well as influences from outside. They changed to accommodate new “material” social habits. New concepts of space and time were imposed by material changes. As Marx argues, different class perspectives force dictated idealistic horizons for social calculation; new forces dictate the extent of social calculations.⁷⁸ As Amartya Sen argues, ethically inspired business is good business as well.

Third, Indian traders did no more want to live in the proverbial well.⁷⁹ Some Western analysts such as David Morris argue that small-scale industries did not fare well because of the disappearance of the entrenched “court culture” as well as adverse effect of British trade with India. However, the earlier Euro-centric globalization had to attend to Indian initiated trading system. Thus, P.C. Bagchi, a distinguished economist of Bengal, argues that the balance of trade was not in favor of India, the pattern changed so much so that the pre-Mughal trade, including the China trade, led to significant exchanges of cultural habits. Jan Nederveen Pieterse argues that the so-called “oriental globalization” could be linked to the increasing demand in participation from the East. Paul Hirst and Grahame Thomson (2002) thus conclude that a new “global system” rather than an “international” trade system was visible in the name of new globalization, which, in anthropological vein, could be; “man’s economic action is submerged in his social relationship.” Marie R. Miyashiro demystifies the process of connecting with alien others. Indeed, Greek ethical thought, with its emphasis on community values, virtue-ethics, and philosophy as a way of life, offers many parallels to classical Hindu thought.

In conclusion, the apparent historical frame in which globalization is understood leads to some unproductive and zero-sum assumptions about its relation to the nation-state. Pollock reminds us that cosmopolitanism is not a new concept by recalling the widespread use of Sanskrit, “There is nothing unusual about finding a Chinese traveler studying grammar in Sumatra in the Seventh Century, an intellectual from Sri Lanka writing literary theory in the northern Deccan in the tenth, or Khmer princes composing Sanskrit political theory for magnificent pillars of Mebon

and Pre Rup in Angkor in the twelfth" (Akhil Gupta, 2008). In that context, Max Weber's quality "legitimation" dealing with social/structural element appears to be more helpful. In this sense, society is traditional, but it is invested with "philosophical wisdom" of the people.⁸⁰ Obviously, inter-subjectivity would depend on supporting inter-subjective moral groundings in international trading systems. So much so that in the manner of social- intersubjectivity, European soldiers, described as powerful Yavanas and Mleccha clad in complete armor acted as bodyguards to Tamil Kings. Roman soldiers were enlisted in the service of Pandyan and other Tamil kings.⁸¹ Traders thus did not only exchange commercial goods but also enriched India's "gene pool." In short, Karl Polanyi (1956) makes a summary statement about inter-subjectivity in trades, arguing that while the economic activity comes to the fore, there is significant social relationship, not necessarily much active inter-subjective interaction between exchanging and the central authority ordering the central place.

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Gender and Natural Resource Management among the Lepchas of Sikkim and Darjeeling

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Both human social and cultural categories like 'Gender' and activities like 'Resource Management' is the product of social, cultural and historical circumstances. This research paper describes the position and role of gender in an Indian Tribal society, i.e. Lepcha. At the same time it also narrates the interrelationship between gender and resource management activity. It describes how and why, in which circumstances gender became a socio-cultural category through activities and processes and practices like resource management. To investigate the structure and function of gender in the said tribal society, it also describes how gender is the part of the social system and how as part of the system it is linked to culture (here specifically references are given in relation to religion and ethnic identity). It describes how the formation of gender is strongly influenced by external forces on the communities. So, social and cultural, in this context, gender relations are always prone to change. In this socio-cultural background how gendered individuals act, is a key objective of this study. In this way resource management and economic activities became gendered as 'Nature' too. When a society interacts with its adjacent nature for various purposes like subsistence

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activity, resource management, it interacts with all its ethical understanding. In this way human activities always socialize and culturalize his/her surroundings. In this context our study focuses on the social-cultural and gendered nature of production and subsistence activity, resource management, commercialization of produces and disease management among the Lepchas of Sikkim and Darjeeling. This study also tries to explore the status and role of gender in production, distribution, consumption process. It is based on ethnographic fieldwork done in the villages of Sikkim and Darjeeling.

[**Keywords** : Gender, Identity, Ethnicity, Resource Management, Lepcha]

1. Introduction

Social and gender relations are a result of a complex array of factors that depend on social, cultural and historical circumstances. Social and gender systems are linked to religion and ethnic identity, but at the same time are strongly influenced by external forces on the communities. Thus, social and, more particularly, gender relations are frequently reinterpreted and renegotiated as traditional societies are faced with new influences and change. In any community, gender representations are not uniform; rather, there are discontinuities and contradictions. The lives and activities of individual women express how they selectively embrace, tolerate, oppose or ignore gender ideologies. In addition, individual women and men, depending on the situation, behave differently in different activities and spheres of life. Thus, the individual activities and practices of women and men demonstrate how the wider forces of change are manifested at the local level through individual lives. However, the importance of individual choice and action is frequently overlooked when highly abstracted views of society assume a homogeneous and unchanging social order that forms an idealized situation often informed primarily by male perspectives. In this context our study focuses on the social and gendered nature of production and subsistence activity, resource management, commercialization of produces and disease management among the Lepchas of Sikkim and Darjeeling. This study also tries to explore the status and role of gender in production, distribution, consumption process in the Lepcha society. And how among the Lepchas gender plays a major role like, governing resources, living with the resources and indeed is governed by resources.

2. Lepcha

Lepchas are the indigenous peoples of Sikkim and Kalimpong and are little known outside the Eastern Himalayas. Several hypotheses have been suggested regarding their place of origin: some claim Tibet (Pinn, 1986), while others have cited possible links to the Kirats of east Nepal (Chmemjong, 1966; Fonning 1987). There is no accepted theory or accurate knowledge of this. The indigenous account of the Lepchas does not contain any tradition or history of migration? they believe that they originated from the divine peaks of Mount Kanchenjunga and the valleys around them. They refer to themselves as *mutanchirongkup*, the beloved sons of the Mother Creator (Tamsang, 1983).

The Lepchas have been influenced largely by two other major ethnic groups found in the region-the Tibetans, who ruled Sikkim for about 300 years, and the Nepalis, who migrated to Sikkim and Darjeeling district in the late 18th and 19th centuries. The Tibetans were powerful then, as they were the rulers, while the Nepalis, who migrated to this area in large numbers, became socially dominant in many ways. In addition, there was the influence of the Christian missionaries, who arrived from the nearby British ruled Darjeeling area (Gorer, 1938; Siiger, 1967).



Fig. 1 : A Bird-Eye View of a Typical Lepcha Village and Agricultural Field (Fieldwork photo)

3. The Region for Lepchas in India

Sikkim is a small state of India, situated in the inner mountain ranges of the eastern Himalayas (area: 7,299 km²; elevation : 300-8580 m above sea level). Kalimpong (area : 1,056.5 km²), which was part of Sikkim before 1706, is one of the district (area: 3,281.87 km²;

elevation: 300-3,000 m above sea level) in the state of West Bengal. The two areas are adjacent to each other and fall within the eastern Himalayan agroclimatic zone. The climate of the region varies from cold temperate and alpine in the northeast to subtropical in the south. The mean annual rainfall ranges from 2,000 to 4,000 mm.

The region has three major ethnic groups- the Bhotias (descendants of Tibetan and Bhutanese immigrants who came to Sikkim in the 16th and 17 centuries), the Lepchas (the indigenous people of Sikkim) and the Nepalis (who migrated from Nepal in the 18th and 19th centuries). In addition, others came to Sikkim as businessmen, traders, service providers and labourers. Numerous ethnic groups, with their own traditional cultures and languages, inhabit the region. However, as a result of long interaction, most of them have integrated to a considerable degree. Many practices and beliefs and even terms from different languages are now used commonly. The most evident sign of this integration is the use of the Nepali language by almost everyone, especially outside the home (Govt. of Sikkim, Sikkim : A Statistical Profile, 1993).

Agriculture is the mainstay of the region and 80 per cent of the people depend on it. Most farmers are smallholders, as per capita availability of land has been declining rapidly due to population pressure. The climate and seasons are conducive to growing a large number of high value cash crops like cardamom, ginger, potatoes and horticultural crops. In general, rice, wheat and oranges are grown at lower elevations, while crops like maize, potatoes, ginger and cardamom are grown in the higher areas. Because of the favourable climate, many people are also commercial flower producers.

Demography

Table 1: Population and Ethnicity of Lepcha Villages of Kalimpong

Sl. No.	Block	Village	H.H.	Total Population	M	F	Ethnicity
1.	Kalimpong	Tashiding	12	59	31	28	Lepcha
2	Kalimpong	Nasey	34	187	105	82	Rai and Lepcha
3.	Kalimpong	Peshore	113	549	296	253	Chhetri Brahmin, Rai and Lepcha

Table-2 : Engagement of Households in Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Activities by Lepcha People

Sl. No.	Name of Villages	Total H.H Number	Engagements in Agricultural Activities (No. of H.H.)	Engagements in Non-Agricultural Activities (No. of H.H.)
1	Tashiding	12	12	0
2	Nasey	34	28	6
3	Peshore	113	94	19

Table-3 : Agriculture as Primary and Secondary Occupation of Lepcha People

Sl. No.	Name of Villages	Total H. H. Number	Agriculture as Primary Occupation	Agriculture as Secondary Occupation	Non Involvement in Agriculture
1	Tashiding	12	9	3	0
2	Nasey	34	25	3	6
3	Peshore	113	89	5	19

The above three tables are the demographic reflection of the study region. Table-1 describes ethnicity wise population distribution among the three villages. It reveals that Tashiding is a completely Lepcha inhabited village, whereas in Nasey village Lepchas are living with Rai people. The village Peshore is inhabited by Chhetri, Rai and Lepcha people. Table 2 describes the economic activities of the village people and Table 3 talks about the role of agriculture as a central economic activity among the Lepcha people in all the three studied villages.

4. Integrating Social and Gender Analysis into Ginger Production and Marketing

Social and gender relations are a result of a complex array of factors that depend on social, cultural and historical circumstances. Social and gender systems are linked to religion and ethnic identity, but at the same time are strongly influenced by external forces on the

communities. Thus, social and, more particularly, gender relations are frequently reinterpreted and renegotiated as traditional societies are faced with new influences and symbols of change (Gurung, 1999). To understand and analyze the social and gender relations within and among the three ethnic groups in this study, it has been crucial to delve into the historical background of the region and its peoples. A dynamic and complex picture emerges from our study.

In any community, gender representations are not uniform? Rather, there are discontinuities and contradictions. The lives and activities of individual women express how they selectively embrace, tolerate, oppose or ignore gender ideologies. In addition, individual women and men, depending on the situation, behave differently in different activities and spheres of life. Thus, the individual activities and practices of women and men demonstrate how the wider forces of change are manifested at the local level through individual lives. However, the importance of individual choice and action is frequently overlooked when highly abstracted views of society assume a homogeneous and unchanging social order that forms an idealized situation often informed primarily by male perspectives (Watkins, 1996).

Ginger is the main, if not only, cash crop for many farmers in the present study area. Although cardamom and tea are also important cash crops, they require more specific conditions and relatively large areas to cultivate them commercially. Both crops, especially tea, also require processing before they reach consumers. In contrast, ginger can be grown economically on small plots in a wide range of environments. Thus, smallholders and marginal farmers can grow ginger and sell or consume the crop without any processing. Ginger is an annual and rhizomes can be harvested twice a year—the main rhizome halfway through the growing cycle and new rhizomes when the crop is fully grown. Because farmers rely so much on this crop, control and decision making in the production cycle are of great importance.

Significant changes are occurring due to commercialization. Traditionally, the Rai community was the major grower of ginger, although the Lepchas also cultivated ginger for use in religious ceremonies. Both communities practiced traditional production methods. However, as the crop became more important commercially, other communities, especially the Nepali Hindu

Brahmin Chhetris, took up its production. These communities had their own beliefs, practices, technologies and methods of cultivation, and gradually their production practices had an effect on the Lepchas and the Rais. At the same time, the commercial value of ginger increased significantly. More nontraditional areas were brought under ginger cultivation, and new techniques were introduced and practiced. Gender roles in cultivation, decision making and control over the crop also changed. These transformations led to some important changes. Over the last 15 to 20 years diseases have affected the crop resulting in a decline in the yield ratio from 1 'seed' rhizome to 8-10 harvested rhizomes to only 1 to 2-3. Many farmers have given up ginger cultivation and others are still struggling to survive because of the absence of alternative income producing crops. Incomes and living standards have declined.

As the commercial value of ginger increased, the Brahmin Chhetri communities began taking over its cultivation with their more advanced methods and new technologies, and the Rais and Lepchas lost their traditional control over the crop. Social relations between the communities began to change. The Brahmin Chhetri who migrated from Nepal has been considered more entrepreneurial as they have always been more involved in agriculture than the other two groups. With their social connections and wider exposure to new information and new agricultural technologies, they soon surpassed the Rais and Lepchas in terms of landholdings and they became the dominant group in the social structure. The Rais and Lepchas gradually began to adopt their practices and beliefs, although with some adaptations.

The Brahmin Chhetri domination of ginger cultivation meant that woman's roles in production and control over ginger declined drastically. For example, the Hindu belief in the 'impurity' of women bars them from entering agricultural fields or even touching the crops. This was compounded by the strongly defined gender roles with regard to 'outside' and 'inside' work among Hindus. They consider any form of monetary function as 'outside work' and, therefore, in the men's sphere. Thus, ginger- a major cash crop- was brought completely under the control of men.

Several research stations and projects are hoping to find solutions to ginger disease problems. Surveys concerning farmers' knowledge and perceptions of diseases and cultural practices have

been conducted. Based on the results of these surveys and research, extension messages have been developed. However, this research and extension work lacks any social and gender analysis and is strongly male biased- a serious shortcoming.



Fig. 2 : A Lepcha Farmer Managing his Field (Fieldwork photo)

5. Study Objectives and Research Questions

This study focuses on the social and gendered nature of ginger production, commercialization and disease management. The study is important for a number of people. First, for researchers to allow them to understand social and gender dynamics, and to identify the constraints and opportunities of the various social groups regarding their livelihood and the role of ginger. Second, for research station staff and extensionists to allow them to understand social and gender dynamics, and how these affect practices (especially in relation to disease management) which could help them come up with methods more acceptable to the farmers. Third, for farmers-ultimately, to help them examine their own methods and practices and come up with solutions for disease problems themselves.

The study also aims to explore strategies for involving women in the management and control of ginger production. Such strategies for addressing women's practical interests would, we hoped, lead to positive changes in their livelihoods. In particular, we set out to identify the enabling and constraining factors affecting the more disadvantaged groups in the region (women, poor, lower castes and classes) concerning control over ginger cultivation as a cash crop.

The following research questions guided the work :

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of men and women in the three ethnic groups concerning the cultivation and commercialization of ginger?
2. How does decision making take place among men and women in the three different ethnic groups concerning access and control over the key resources (land, labour, knowledge, capital)?
3. How do more general transformations in social and gender relations and in society affect the decision making process for an important activity such as ginger production?

6. Tools and Methods

Different tools were used at the various stages. Various tools were used for data collection, such as a seasonal calendar, activity profile, semi-structured interviews, group discussions, key informants and participant observation. We collected several oral testimonies. A review of secondary sources (books, journals, papers, articles) provided historical and background information. Attempts were made to collect information about when the crop was not commercially important in the area, when the crop became commercially important, when the crop began suffering from diseases, the period before the Brahmin came to the region, after the Brahmin settlement and start of ginger cultivation, and the present status. Data analysis focused broadly on social and gender roles, and relations with reference to ginger cultivation, diseases and management. We paid special attention to variables such as key stakeholders, economic relations, markets and institutional linkages.

7. Role of Ginger in the Social Life of Lepcha Tribe

The Lepchas respect ginger and give priority to the crop as it is required in all their religious rituals and also for curing diseases. All Lepcha households cultivate ginger because they are not allowed to take ginger from others for rituals. Thus, among Lepchas and Bhotias, ginger remains a relatively important crop. Like the Rais, the Lepchas observe a religious ritual before using, eating or even bringing the new ginger crop into the house. In this ritual the spirit from the river Teesta is called on and offered paddy, a red cock and some local wine along with ginger. Once the offerings are made and the chanting completed, the spirit is guided back to its original place.

It is believed that if this ritual is not observed, bad things will happen to the family and household? for instance, people will fall sick, cattle will die, or crop production will be poor.

7.1 The Lepcha Villages: Nasey, Peshore and Tashiding

These three villages in the Kalimpong area are adjacent to one another. The nearest town is Kalimpong, approximately 8 to 10 km away. As in the other villages of the area, most of the people depend on farming and are all smallholders. The main crops are rice and maize, but they also cultivate round chilli, ginger, cucumber, tomatoes and other vegetables. According to the residents, about 15 years ago 40 to 45 per cent of the total cultivated area was devoted to ginger, but ginger now is grown on less than 5 per cent. Most of the farmers now cultivate this crop for home consumption only. The main reason for this drastic reduction in ginger cultivation is disease.

7.2 Ginger Production and Commercialization in Peshore, Nasey and Tashiding

Before the farmers began large scale cultivation of ginger, the only fertilizer they used ash, which was spread over the field. The men would plough the land while the women planted the crop. They collected seed rhizomes from the current crop and stored them in pits in the field for sowing the following year. Old Lepcha farmers point out an interesting fact: previously, other communities did not buy seed from the Lepchas, Rais and Limbus because they were afraid of the spirits living in the ginger fields of these communities. They believed that if they bought ginger from them, they might catch the dewa disease.

In this area commercialization of ginger began among the Lepchas only in about 1979-80. The Lepcha farmers saw how other farmers, especially the Tamangs of Peshore village, earned a lot of money by selling ginger and began to cultivate it commercially. During the early 1980s 50 per cent of the Lepcha farmers of the area were growing ginger for sale, although most of the older farmers did not. Disease set in very soon and commercial cultivation declined rapidly. Currently, only 10 per cent of the people in this area cultivate ginger on a commercial basis.

Disease became severe in the mid 1980s. According to some farmers, one of the main reasons for its rapid spread is that when ginger cultivation started commercially there was not enough seed

and they had to bring some in from other areas. They believe that these rhizomes carried the disease. Farmers also purchased from Muslim traders who used to visit the area. The farmers also have other theories about the causes of disease problems. One is the use of fertilizers? as the farmers began to cultivate ginger on a large scale, they began to apply fertilizers to increase yield. Larger scale production meant disease problems. Second is the belief that water flowing to the village from the Durpin area, an army cantonment, is contaminated with various chemicals like soap, oil and petrol. Third is deforestation. Fourth is the short time between cultivation periods? farmers feel that soil should be given a rest every five to seven years, a practice that earlier farmers followed.

7.3 Interethnic Social Relations

Historically, the region and its people have been exposed to various external influences from historical movements of people due to conquests and wars, trade, migration and immigration. They have been confronted with a myriad of influences: the lamaist culture of Tibetan Buddhism, the caste system of Hinduism, the more 'egalitarianism' of Christianity, British colonialism and lowland traders. The process of interaction with and influence of, these external hegemonies was based on relations of inequity. Stratification on the basis of class, caste, wealth, religion and gender became the norm.

A study of the social relations among the three communities shows how they have influenced each other. The Rais, for whom ginger is a very important crop religiously, and who were the first to migrate to and settle the region, had close contacts with and an influence on the Lepchas. Both ethnic groups belong to the Tibeto-Burman community and share many traditional tribal beliefs and practices. Inter-marriage has reinforced exchanges. This is a major reason for the similarity in the religious rituals surrounding ginger. According to the oral testimonies of the old Lepcha farmers, they learned to do the nayako puja ritual from their daughters who were married into the Limbu ethnic group. The Limbus and the Rais belong to the Kirat group and share traditional beliefs, rituals and practices. When the Brahmin Chhetris settled in this region, their influence began to be felt by the Rais and Lepchas. As the old Lepcha farmers said, they learnt to plant ginger in beds from them. But the Brahmin Chhetris also learned ginger cultivation methods from the

Rais and the Lepchas? the practice of storing ginger underground is an example. They also began to observe the nayako puja.

Commercialization of the crop resulted in closer social relations among the various communities. The farmers began to exchange ideas and information about cultivation and to trade, buy and sell seed. Market forces deepened social relations, not only among the three main ethnic groups, but also with other groups. Traders from the lowlands represented market forces? they bought ginger and set the price. Many of the farmers also began to buy ginger seed from these Muslim tradesmen, creating a new social division: farmers (no matter to which ethnic community they belonged) versus those in control of commercialization.

However, differences remained, at least in people's perceptions. The Lepchas are considered more reticent and less sociable, while the Brahmin Chhetris are more enterprising, better agriculturists and have more knowledge. The Rais fall between these two groups. Today, social relations among all the ethnic groups continue to be dynamic with a lot of give and take and exchange of information on cultivating methods, disease management, prices, places to sell and sources of seed. However, in most cases, the parma system remains within the same ethnic community.

7-4 Current Cultivation Techniques

In the selection of land for ginger cultivation, fields where water stagnates are avoided. Farmers also believe that planting the same land every year does not produce a good crop. Chosen fields are cleared of all vegetation by burning and the ash is used as fertilizer. In Nasey, Peshore, Tashiding the land is then ploughed, dug and hoed. A second plowing occurs 15 to 18 days later. Cow dung (8-10 cm) is applied to the fields and they are plowed again to mix the manure into the soil. The terrain is too steep to plow? instead, people turn the soil by hand and hoe. Beds 20 to 25 cm high are prepared with drains between them. Just before planting, the stored ginger seed rhizomes are sorted again. Good healthy rhizomes, that are, large, shiny, free from spots or marks, and free from bud or eye injury, are selected. The rest are sold in the market.

The selected ginger rhizomes are planted in two or three zigzag rows in the beds and covered with up to 8 cm of soil. The spacing between the rhizomes should be about 15 cm. Some farmers believe

that to increase production, one can plant three or four rows in a bed. During planting the seed rhizomes are broken into pieces to ensure that each has two to four sprouts. Immediately after planting, the beds are mulched with dry leaves up to 8 to 10 cm thick. Some farmers use mulch made by putting grasses in the cowshed for a few days so that it mixes with cow urine and dung. Mulching protects the seedlings from rain, prevents weed growth, keeps the soil soft and moist, and accelerates growth. Most of the farmers practice intercropping with maize as maize plants provide shade to the ginger. Maize is planted in the drains in between the beds. The farmers prefer the improved 'NLD' variety as it is shorter and has less chance of being blown over by wind.

After about a month, the beds are weeded. Ginger shoots are still very small and the chances of damage to them are high. Weeds are uprooted and disposed of outside the bed. When the ginger plants have three or four leaves, the mau or mother rhizome is removed, although if it is too small, it is left in place. Care must be taken not to damage the roots and cause infection. The roots are immediately covered again with soil. The mau is sold wherever the farmers can get a good price for it? some sell it to traders at the nearby markets. Some farmers sell it to the cooperative society. This income is very important, as it solves financial problems during the rainy season. Fifteen days after mau extraction, manure is applied.

Farmers have been experimenting with various disease management practices in different villages. Some Lepcha farmers clean all the mud from the bottom of the diseased plant and expose the roots to the sun. Rotten plant roots are scratched and ash is applied. Some believe that just exposing the roots of infected plants to the air and sun can stop further spread of disease. The farmers say that these roots or rhizomes germinate and grow well. Some farmers cultivate ginger only in sloping fields using traditional methods, that is, without much land preparation. They just scratch the soil to make a hole and plant the rhizome seed in it. Many farmers contend that red soil helps control disease. One Rai farmer planted bikphul (*Glorisa*) in a ginger field where disease had been rampant. According to him, his ginger crop was very good that year without any disease. However, he has not been able to verify or repeat the experiment because he has only a limited area for ginger cultivation. One Lepcha farmer planted some ginger on rock covered with soil. The crop here did not have disease.



**Fig. 3 : A Lepcha Farmer Pouring Water to the Field
(Fieldwork photo)**

8. Gender Roles and Ethnicity in Cultivation Practices

1. Site selection is done by the head of the family, whether male or female, of all households at the two sites at Kalimpong. Also, if a male head of household is absent for whatever reason, the wife automatically takes on the role of head of the family and is responsible for this task. However, it is mainly the male head of the family who does the site selection. Only when the male head was absent did women take on this task.
2. Land preparation is done equally by men and women. In Nasey, Peshore, and Tashiding men do the plowing while women do the hoeing and digging? where there is no plowing, both men and women are equally involved in digging and hoeing the fields. However, in cases where the families follow the parma system, it is the male who does this work as it is felt that men can work more than women. Similarly, if the households need hired labour for this work, they hire men.
3. Sowing and planting are done by both men and women. However, usually only family members are involved. The reason given for this is that hired labour will not plant with as much care as household members.
4. Manure application is done by both men and women equally.
5. Mulching is done mostly by men, although women help when required.
6. Weeding is done by both men and women, although when hired labour is required for this task, women are employed. The

wages for female labourers (INR 25) are lower than those for men (INR 40).

7. Extraction of maurhizomes is done by both men and women. However, usually only family members do this work as much care is needed to keep from damaging the plant. Farmers prefer not to employ hired labour for this.
8. Soil covering is mainly done by men, as it is heavy and strenuous work requiring physical strength.
9. Harvesting is done by both men and women equally and usually only household members are involved.
10. Seed storage is done both by both men and women.
11. Marketing is done entirely by men, except in female headed households.
12. Purchasing seed is generally done by men. However, where the head of the household is a woman or the male head of household is absent, then the female head of the family takes on this responsibility.

It is evident that in all the communities the roles of men and women at the various stages of cultivation are almost similar. The differences depend more on household and family circumstances than on ethnicity. It should be noted, however, that Brahmin Chhetri women in male headed households have less say in matters of site selection and purchase of seeds than women in the Lepcha and Rai communities. As one of the old Brahmin farmers put it, 'I do not think that women are experienced in selection of fields, so I do not trust them to do this.'

The oral testimonies of the older men gave us an historical perspective. We learned that among the Rais, men used to play a more dominant role. In most families the male head of household was completely in charge and he was the only one who entered the ginger field. Among the Lepchas, both men and women seemed to have had an equal role. As one of the old farmers explained, 'Men plowed the field and the women planted the seeds and covered them with soil.' The women did the seed selection. However, men would perform the religious rituals with women merely participating passively. The tradition among the Brahmin Chhetris was for women to cultivate ginger when the crop was grown in small quantities for household consumption. However, with commercialization and the

production of large quantities, the work was taken over by men with women merely acting as 'helpers'.

Other differences between traditional and current practices also exist. For example, not all Rais and Lepchas observe the traditional religious ritual before eating or using the new ginger crop. Those who do still observe it shorten the ritual by just offering ginger to the spirit. The Rais have discontinued the practice of not working in the fields when there is a birth in the family. The main reason given for this was that nowadays families are scattered and it is not always possible to get news on time. Farmers also said that this practice is no longer practical in the face of high labour demand and high salaries. The Rais have stopped observing saran? they think it is no longer either practical or feasible. The younger generation does not even know when saran occurs. Many Brahmin Chhetris have also abandoned the practice. Similarly, the practice of not working on Tuesdays or 'si' and 'mi' days has become less and less common, and the ban on working in the fields on the anniversary of the death of a family member is practiced by only a few farmers. However, in contrast, some of the Brahmin Chhetri farmers have started to observe the nayako puja, the ritual conducted before eating the new ginger crop.



Fig. 4 : Lepcha Man and Woman in their Field (Fieldwork photo)

8.1 Gender Relations and Ethnicity

We looked at four aspects of gender relations: the roles of men and women in the agricultural work? access to land, labour and capital, and limitations on access? decision making and control?and image and self-esteem.

These last two are based on elements of cultural ideology, symbols and statements that explicitly devalue women and socio-cultural arrangements that exclude women from participating

in various religious activities or from holding power in society. Thus, the image and self-image of women and their confidence are influenced by gender ideologies, state ascribed roles, cultural taboos and expectations, education and exposure to the outside world, ability to earn money, roles in decision making, and their own inner sense of autonomy, identity and strength (Gurung, 1999).

8.2 Roles of Men and Women

Generally, as we described earlier, men and women do almost equal work, from land preparation to seed storage. Roles depend more on the family situation than on gender or ethnicity. Where a family has enough male members, women do not work much in the fields, whereas in families with fewer men, women worked equally side by side with them. However, ethnic socio-cultural values are strong among the Brahmin Chhetris? Brahmin Chhetri women do not participate in ginger production as actively as Rai and Lepcha women.

Overall, women's work remains undervalued compared with men's. Women are seen, by both men and women, as helpers of men and, in general, their workload and is far greater than men's. Women not only work in the fields as much as or more than men, but they also have the major role in housework and caretaking.

8.3 Access and Limitations

By and large, women have almost equal access to all inputs required for ginger cultivation (seeds, land, labour). In all the families and households interviewed, both male and female members have equal opportunity to work in the fields, as well as to collect, select and store ginger. However, there was one limiting factor for women: the Hindu belief in their 'impurity'. Menstruating Rai and Brahmin Chhetri women are not allowed to enter ginger fields or even touch ginger seeds for 12 days.

Women have equal access to income from the ginger. However, this access clearly depends on their position in the household (for example daughter, mother, newly married daughter-in-law, mother-in-law). Normally, the more senior the woman in the household the more access she has to the money. Access does not necessarily mean that women have the freedom to spend cash income any way they desire. In all cases they first have to consult the family, especially the husband, and reach an agreement. Men, on the

other hand, spend any money they receive to purchase whatever way they want (drinking, gambling, buying what they want) without consulting the family or getting approval.

A major limitation that women face concerns wages for agricultural labour. The wages of women labourers are systematically lower than those of men. This difference is based on the belief that women have less physical strength. The market is considered a male domain. Women are considered to be less knowledgeable about the market. Although this was the case in all the communities we studied, it was more evident in the Brahmin Chhetri community. However, changes are occurring. In all the communities the current generation of women is more actively involved in marketing than their mothers and grandmothers. More and more women are engaging in commercialization, either alone or along with a male member or members of their family. This trend also varies by type of household and among individuals.

8.4 Decision Making and Control

Decision making opportunities and roles of women differ, from both within households and within communities. Decision making is a complex process and is influenced by many factors. Women's input ranges from advice to recommendations and, in few cases, to actual decisions depending on her position in the family and household, and, to a certain extent, the community. Among the Lepcha and Rai communities, mothers and older daughters who are knowledgeable participate equally in selecting the site for ginger cultivation, whereas among the Brahmin Chhetri farmers women are less involved in this task. Only female heads of household make this decision alone. The decision to buy and sell ginger is mostly made by the male head of the family, with women playing only an advisory role. However, differences exist depending on the family, position of the women in the household and individual people involved. Although in general women have a minor role in decision making, there are a few examples where women are equally, if not more, involved in this sphere.

By and large, women do not have much control over important assets like land. In most cases land is inherited by sons, leaving women without this important source of collateral for obtaining credit from formal institutions. Although equal inheritance rights are given to sons and daughters by the law under the 1956 Hindu

Succession Act, custom still views men as the breadwinner and head of the family. Women do not seem to have much control over their own labour, as their wages are based on the male dominated perception of women not being able to do as much work as men. Women's control of the money earned from ginger sales depends on their position in the household. The higher her position, the more control she has over this money, although the control is never complete because she must often spend it not how she pleases, but rather in response to the demands of her husband and family.

8.5 Image and Self-esteem

Our study shows that strong elements and symbols of cultural ideology explicitly or implicitly devalue women among the Rais and the Brahmin Chhetri communities. Women are considered impure and unclean because of their childbearing role. These communities consider menstruating women 'impure' and do not allow them to enter agricultural fields. Similarly, after giving birth a woman is considered 'impure' for at least seven days? during this period the whole household is considered 'unclean' and no one is allowed to work in the fields.

Women's image in these communities is one of inferiority. This is reinforced by the socio-cultural taboo against women performing ginger rituals among the Rais, which has been adopted by the Lepcha and Brahmin Chhetrias well as by other communities. The self-image of woman varies considerably. In general, younger women tend to have a better self-image than older ones. Young women have more self-confidence because of their greater exposure to the outside world and greater mobility. Most of the younger women think they are as good as men in every sense, including marketing of ginger. Older women tend to support and justify the existing male domination and their subservient roles as part of their cultural tradition, while the younger women are more aware of their rights and the inequity of their status. Their self-esteem varies from family to family, and ethnicity seems less a factor. In all cases, the situation at the household and family level has a major influence on women's image and self-esteem.

In summary, our analysis of gender relations in the region provides a complex web of confusing and sometimes contradictory evidence. There is evidence of the almost universal subjugation of women, but there are also signs that more equitable relations

between men and women are emerging. Gender relations are not uniform in all households of a community and they differ between communities. They vary depending on individual men and women, and how they react and behave in various situations. Rai, Lepcha and Bhotia women have more autonomy, freedom of movement and opportunities to engage in entrepreneurial activities, assert their opinions, and influence important household and community decisions. At the same time, younger women in all the communities are taking a much more active role? they participate not only in the work but also in decision making and marketing. These changes are shaped by such factors as education, exposure to modern ideas, greater mobility, increased awareness of the outside world and increased political awareness. We found that younger women have much more confidence, a better self-image and more self-esteem than the older generation.



Fig. 5 : A Bird's Eye View of Lepcha Agricultural Field
(Fieldwork photo)

9. Conclusion

The future of ginger production and commercialization is characterized by both constraints and opportunities. We conclude by describing some of those faced by women and by poor farmers. The major constraint women face is the lack of ownership of land? in all cases it is the male head of the family who legally owns the land. This leads to another major problem for women: they have limited access to credit, especially from formal institutions like banks, as land is the most common collateral. Most women are overburdened with work

as they undertake all household chores, shoulder the family responsibility of bringing food to the table, look after livestock, and work alongside men in the cultivation of crops. Most women have no time to take an active part in the marketing of ginger. Consequently, this limits their opportunities to control cash income. Socio-culturally, it is not acceptable for women to be active and 'loud', especially in regard to marketing or other 'outside' activities? thus, they cannot take an active role in decision making and control.

In terms of opportunities (younger) Rai and Brahmin Chhetri women especially are exploring new avenues. Many of them are self-confident and have high self-esteem. Rai women are demonstrating entrepreneurship, while Brahmin Chhetri women have opportunities to participate in politics, particularly at the village level. They have become more aware of their rights. Many younger women are very much aware of things happening at the national and international levels. Rai women at Kharka Sangsay said that they believed that the price of the ginger depends on international demand and markets, especially in Arab countries where demand for ginger is high. They expressed worry about the recent Iraq war as this might have a negative impact on the price of ginger.

Poor farmers have a limited amount of land and cannot cultivate much ginger as they require all available land to grow subsistence crops for their families. They also cannot afford to conduct experiments like those with more land. In Central Pandam poor farmers are usually migrants from Nepal and do not own any land legally. They cultivate land on a sharecropping basis or by leasing it. In addition, they do not have a right or access to the many facilities given to the farmers of that area by the state government. Poor farmers often learn cultivation and disease management practices from the farmers for whom they work as wage labourers, and this often helps them. Future action research could focus on ways to support them better.

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Governance in Digital Era

*Archana Sawshilya**

The seeds of Digital Governance in India were sowed in early 90's but over the years, especially in the last decade, Digital Governance has emerged as an effective tool to prevent corrupt practices besides speeding up delivery of citizen services. Before January 2020 Digital Governance was perceived largely as a necessary instrument to minimize administrative delays, red-tapism and enhance accountability and transparency in Government and Private sectors. Post January 2020 and with the advent of COVID 19 crisis digital working has emerged as the new normal for conducting government, business and personal activities. Lockdown and social distancing have forced people to interact and work digitally and actively adopt to the norms of digital governance in personal and professional lives. Innovations and technology are considered to be enabling factors for promoting digital governmental effectiveness and promptness to bring about desirable change in day to day administration and behavior. Technology ensures efficiency and effectiveness but following it blindly can become counter-productive. Each and every organization shows different version of understanding and interpretation as far as their organizational structure and digital related policies are concerned. Digitization is the need of the hour and the future but while individuals, corporate, state and center have gone ahead and gladly adopted the new digital platforms, there is a stark absence of a common digital strategy platform for the nation to come together and the garden of digital India is growing as a

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garden of weeds rather than beautiful Garden. One can easily lose way in this garden of weed.

[**Keywords :** Digital governance, Red tapism, Digital strategy, Digital platforms, Accountability and transparency]

1. Introduction

In the digital age with the growth and extension of democratic ideas to the online realm, there is a growing need to make governance more participative and bidirectional. Here technology is expected to play a fundamental role in bringing about this paradigm shift. In today's world, Digital Governance is the need of the hour to minimize bureaucratic delays, redtapism and to enhance accountability in an organisation. Digital technology ensures responsiveness by making the administrative activities transparent and hassle-free. ICT enabled websites, internet related services and online transactions are not only convenient and effective for clients but also leave no scope for unethical practices and wrongdoings

Good governance is defined as an ART where each word has a significant definition such as A stands for Accountability, R for Responsiveness and T for Transparency. Technology and innovation are the guiding forces of this entire process to instill efficiency and performance among government staff. NDA Government has initiated, promoted and even lawfully imposed online management of official activities in education and several other economic sectors to ensure transparency leading towards corruption free India. On 1st July 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched an ambitious plan called Digital India. It aimed at taking nation digitally and electronically ahead to accelerate the economy and transform our society. It emphasized on empowering Indian society digitally and coaxed Indians into the digital era with open access to information in different fields - health, education and economy. Digital India visualized many things - e-governance (electronic delivery of government services, common service centers (CSS), two way communication between government and citizens(Mygov.in), universal mobile connectivity by increasing network penetration . This e-kranti reduced paperworks and increased cashless transactions in all government sectors. In 2015 no one could have ever imagined that after years everyone of us would be forced to lean on digital connectivity for availing different services and more

importantly for our livelihood in times of corona. Digital networks emerged as savior to meet many of our day to day needs and helped connect citizens to the government for assistance.

The adoption of digitization by the government is touching every individual, private and government sector today. Starting from something as common as Araogya Setu, a user friendly tool which is helping India to track and fight the pandemic in a more informed manner, to introduce telemedicine in hospitals including AIIMS and thus ensuring healthcare availability to all without risking unnecessary exposure. Technology and digital governance is fast changing the way we work today. NIC is playing a pivotal role in ensuring effective Digital governance and strategy and even government departments as complex as Trade, Commerce and Finance are now functioning digitally. Digital strategy articulates an organization's approach to understand the capabilities of the Internet and the World Wide Web and make use of them to enhance value for different stakeholders. A digital strategy has both guiding principles and performance objectives. They ensure highest possible digital quality and effectiveness. A well planned and well implemented digital governance framework create more transparent, accountable and productive work environment with higher quality result.

Digital governance does not require bureaucratic handling so it is very effective. A Properly designed strong program framework and its effective communication and engagement can make online business machinery sing. It establishes a sort of digital development DNA ensuring digital presence in a manner that is in harmony with the organization's strategic objectives. Digital governance provides an effective channel that leads to good governance. Digital governance or e-governance has become instruments of our activities -administrative, private or public sectors.

2. Factors shaping Digital Governance Framework and its Design Process

Following factors are responsible for shaping digital governance framework and its design process :

2.1 Corporate Governance Dynamics

Digital governance is considered as compartment of corporate governance imbibing its dynamics.

2.2 External Demands

Digital framework and its design are also shaped by market needs and geographical demands. As the global world is moving at a fast pace adopting digital governance models, it is imperative for our government to do the same and be a frontrunner in the global economy or perish. State and Region wise needs and constraints of technological developments also affect effectiveness of e governance.

2.3 World Wide Web Governance and Internet Collaboration

World wide web governance and internet collaboration has now become a necessity during COVID 19 crisis.

2.4 Organizational Culture and Demands from its stakeholders

Organizational culture and demands from its stakeholders also determine digitized environment.

2.5 The Existence and Presence of Digital Team, its Constitution and Nature, Roles and Responsibilities

These are important factors shaping digital administration of any institution. Many organizations don't even bother to update their websites and this is very much prevalent in Government organizations. Uploading of Citizens charters on the websites are generally opposed by the staff of private as well as government sectors. Most of the government organizations do not upload Grievance Redressal Mechanism, complaints received and resolved despite of several notifications and reminders from the higher authorities

2.6 Social Media in Governance

Social media is increasingly becoming a fertile ground for new initiatives such as spreading awareness about governance schemes and gauging public reaction through instant feedback. During COVID crisis 2019-20 entire world was relying only on electronic media for news and government support system.

2.7 Developing Innovation and Technology

Developing innovation and technology requires impetus in three key thrust areas :

Education and research : It is generally perceived and now acknowledged also that advanced education aims at innovative

research and development. This perception changed into reality from January 2020, when the education sector throughout the world totally changed from class room personal interaction to digital platforms. All the stakeholders of education sectors initially with resistance and later with compulsion adapted to this digital technology.

ICT enabled machineries : Government sponsored research activities, education; economy all needed ICT enabled machineries and world today is not an exception.

Industry-academia collaboration : Industry-academia collaboration to commercialize the innovations and to continue with economic and academic activities.

2.8 Involving People in Governance

Involvement of People in governance can be achieved by three ways 1. Managerial - Vertical flow of information focused on speedy delivery for specific areas or services 2. Consultative - Understanding societal interest and opinions on proposed schemes through portals by citizens 3. Participative - Receiving information and analysis of interests' inputs from citizens and creating a cyber society having social network.

3. Challenges Ahead

Digital India programme had to face many challenges due to ambiguity in plans and policies. Due to digital illiteracy among people, low internet connectivity and lack of interest and coordination in the government departments, it was difficult to implement it successfully. In remote villages people couldn't enjoy even mobile connectivity due to poor response by service providers, who could not find these locations commercially viable for their business. Government had made its best efforts to address these challenges but until March 2020, not much success was achieved. Some challenges which can be witnessed even today are:

The first and foremost challenge in the path of successful implementation of an effective digital economy is the lack of a common, well defined, bureaucratic hassle free, e governance framework. A strong, effective and efficient e governance model needs a strong core digital team which has the authority to adopt and implement new technical platforms and technology without red tapes while staying within the policy framework. Today the core

digital team, both in government and private sector is stuck in the web of red tape. So it is important and imperative to be proactive in designing the framework in advance

Many organizations hesitate to change and also to improve their digital governance. The reasons for this resistance are manifold. Sometimes many organizations refuse to adapt digital technology for fear of failures and they being unfamiliar with technology. Other factor of resistance to it is Political patronage and corrupt practices. We are well aware that in an environment governed with digital technology nothing can be hidden so at times organizational leadership also express reluctance to adopt digital process lest hidden skeletons start falling out of the cupboard. The automation of official and business processes (for e.g. e-tendering) can monitor their day to day activities and lessen their discretion and relaxation in performing their roles. This problem is also found in powerful or influential business units. Biometric attendance of staff is strongly opposed in all sectors leading to indiscipline and absence from the office. Too often, organizations choose to ignore the call for transparent governance, even when the organization is at risk and the problems need to be addressed. They prefer to be silent in order to be non confrontational and not blowing the whistle to expose adverse practices going on in the organisation. Government employees also do not want to expose governmental lapses for fear of victimization from powerful seniors. Public officials neither show their desires to develop digital strategy nor want to use the technology in an efficient and effective manner. Government offices badly need technology friendly environment and transparent web based official practices. Needless to say all organizational sectors-education, economic and government needed digital practices and the Covid 19 crisis has left NO Option for them but to become web friendly and web monitored

Lack of proper support and infrastructure is also impacting the adoption of technology in the new digital age creating gaps in effective digital governance. A simple example of this is that while we have introduced online classes, government and municipal school teachers and children do not have the skills or resources to participate in the e learning process thus widening the gap between the education and learning. It is important for the designers of the digital strategy to focus on the lack of skills and resources for a huge section of the Indian population and provide proper budget, support

and infrastructure to ensure that they can participate in and benefit from the new digital strategy and become active participants of the new norm of digital governance.

However it all appears like putting a Lipstick on a pig ,we cannot deny the truth even if you put a lipstick on a pig, the saying goes, it is still a pig. In a rush to join the digitization bandwagon several organizations, private public and government, have created a digital external presence by reaching out to the people through beautifully designed websites. However, merely looking good online does not ensure its effective operation until and unless there is a real digital strategic thought process behind the scenes to ensure ease of business flow, ensuring real time data availability, and promising trust, transparency, data security to the external users. I have come across many organizations having well maintained website and digitally maintained details but there is no real digital strategy nor coordinated digital team to update data and relevant information and governance is in a bad shape.

Whatever be the reason for reluctance to adopt a strong digital framework, the present day crisis has necessitated the adoption of digitalization for each of us and it has become the new norm. Today no one can resist digital governance and risk the possibility of perishing in the new digital world.

4. Way Out : Making Technology Effective and Efficient

No doubt, technology promotes effectiveness ,promptness, transparency and ease of doing business but if not properly managed with proper controls and guidelines, technology can prove to be a very powerful tool in the hands of people who can misuse the same. Every day we read and hear of technology misuse for cheat and fraud dealings. While it is easy to adopt a digital platform but doing so without a 360 degree digital strategy that provides a safe framework for the organization as well as the customer, the new normal will be more of a bane than a boon for the coming generations.

Digital policy, digital strategy and digital standards are essential for any good organization and what is needed is creation of real online values and commitment for the organization and also from the team working for it. We need to identify and design Organizational Digital Team in a much more planned manner to assure authority and accountability.

Not just each organization as a separate entity, the government has to proactively, and at a very fast pace develop a strong framework of controls to ensure data sanctity and security so that the organizations and individuals in the new normal digital work can have peace and prosperity.

5. Conclusion

We have moved from stone age to space age, humanity has progressed on the strength of innovations and technology. Our Governance like a living organism has been - constantly adapting and evolving. If we sow the seed of change today, tomorrow we and our future generations will be reaping benefits. Therefore, we need dynamic and excellent leadership to initiate and promote changes and holistic reforms which can be goal oriented, change oriented and client oriented because after all Governance is all about being People centric and change oriented for better tomorrow. This stands true in the wake of crisis when COVID 19 did not give us choice to choose rather forced us to become digital friendly in our personal and professional lives.

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Impact of Nirankari Mission in a Rural Setting

*Kavita Rani**

The Mission was founded on May 25, 1929 in Rawalpindi by Baba Buta Singh Ji. This the day when Baba Avtar Singh Ji received God-knowledge from Baba Buta Singh Ji and joined him in taking the spiritual light to as many people as possible. He started the Mission to show the path of knowing and becoming aware of One Formless Almighty God and this is how Sant Nirankari Mission and Satguru tradition began. The present paper is an attempt to analyze the impact of Nirankari Mission in a rural setting. It has been shown that the Mission has provided common spiritual platform to everyone, without converting his/her caste and religion. It has helped in decreasing discrimination by bringing together the so called 'inferior and superior' in caste-based society.

[**Keywords** : Nirankari Mission, Rural setting, Discrimination, Almighty God, *Brahm Gyan*]

1. Nirankari Mission : An Introduction

As the name goes, the Mission's corner stone is the realization of God of Formless one, Nirankar. He is omnipresent and pervades every particle of the universe. He is imminent and all are in Him, and

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being transcendent, He is in all. He is the creator, nurturer and ultimate end of all that is visible. Though formless, one can know God, perceive Him and realize Him and liberate himself from the bondage of transmigration or life and death.

The mission, however, does not end up with the description of the Truth of God. The emphasis here is on knowing the Supreme Entity *i.e.* God. We do not mind to name God differently, but we would stress on His oneness despite the multiplicity of names. While the entire universe is subject to change, the Almighty God is not.

The Mission believes that God be realized only through the True Master (*Satguru*). Since the seeker requires a hint to perceive or realize God, *Satguru* must be present in physical form, even though his real importance lies in his formless entity. *Satguru* here is the embodiment of Formless God. Just like God, we can realize the presence of *Satguru* all the time, everywhere. Again like God, *Satguru* is not bound by the considerations of caste, colour and creed. Significantly, *Satguru* in our Mission attaches us with the Almighty and not own physical form when it comes to the question of devotion.

Just as God manifests Himself and function in the physical form of *Satguru*, *Satguru* manifests himself and functions in the physical form of saints who receive God-knowledge. He offers them his holy seat, his *Dupatta* (scarf) and bestows all his spiritual powers to them. Practically he bestows his entity on his disciples and operates through their physical form and blesses one and all. This, however, does not mean that the disciple replaces *Satguru*. It is *Satguru* who merges his spiritual identity into that of the disciple.

As we receive *Brahm Gyan*, we are advised to seek the company of spiritually enlightened saints (*Satsang*), do service to others (*Sewa*) and remember God (*Sumiran*) to keep us steadfast in our devotion to God and faith in *Satguru*. They also keep us away from bondage of superstitions. While *Satsang* presents a beautiful picture of unity in diversity and promotes love, respect and humility. *Sumiran* keeps us conscious of the presence of God in every thought and action and thus fosters noble virtues instead of negative feelings. *Sewa* enables every devotee to give expression to his or her devotion to the Almighty. A significant feature of *Satsang*, *Sewa* and *Sumiran* in this Mission is that they are free from bindings and restrictions.

Thee Mission believes that religion symbolized by rites and rituals which differ from faith to faith, rather set to sect, is not the reality simply because it seeks to segment one group of people from the other. The Mission feels that the rites and rituals being practiced by way of worship of God are not the end or the Truth by itself. If at all, they become meaningful only after one realizes the Truth or knows God. The best way to worship God, then, will be to realize His presence all the time everywhere and associate Him in every action of daily life. True religion, the Mission says, unites mankind, it never divides. Naturally, we conclude that Humanity, taking the entire human race into its fold, promising equality and universal brotherhood, is the best religion.

The Mission treats God as that sacred link that inter-connects every objects of the universe- animate or inanimate. His common cord unites every human being with one another. This feeling oneness takes the mankind beyond national boundaries and physical distances. We may live anywhere on earth, speak any language, wear any dress, follow any religion or culture, we are one simply because we exist in God and God exists in us all at the same time. God is also the supreme source of all divine virtues. Hence once we are with God, we imbibe these virtues including love, compassion, humility, tolerance, broad-vision, selflessness and so on. We become human beings in real sense.

To join the Sant Nirankari Mission means you have received God-knowledge or *Brahm Gyan*. Before this ceremony, however, every seeker is given five principles which help him or her not only to understand the divine truth but also to take full advantages of its realization, in day- to-day life. They are called 'Five pledges' not in the sense of a pre- condition for receiving *Brahm Gyan*, but because otherwise the devotee will neither understand it nor take its advantages in practical life. They are pledges or a commitment to oneself to follow these noble principles in one's life.

The first principles, is all worldly assets- physical, mental and material ultimately belong to God and one should treat them as such and not be proud of the same. Physical possessions include the body with its strength, height and look or appearance. The possessions of mind refer to one's educational qualifications, art or craft he learns and the occupation or career based on the same, and wealth includes not only one's property or money one has, all his social relations are also his wealth.

The second principal is that one should not be proud of one's religion, caste, creed and colour one should not consider one's religion and caste as superior or more sacred than the religion and caste of other, and be proud of the same. This will automatically remove the feeling of hatred against others on this account.

Thirdly, one should not hate or criticize others on account of their diet and dress declaring one's own as superior and pride-worthy. The Mission is convinced that such diversities are bound to exist, because they are dictated by Nature through different climates. Moreover, what one eats, drinks or wears is related to the body, having nothing to do with the soul. One may it should become a reason to be proud. One should not preach one's own choice and thrust it upon others and thus add on to the dimensions of discord, tension and conflict.

The fourth principal here is that one must not leave one's hearth and home and become a recluse or ascetic and thus be a burden on society. God can be realized while performing normal duties of daily life. So, one should not run away from his responsibilities towards himself, his family and the society at large, on the pretext of search for the Ultimate Truth. One must earn one's own livelihood through honest hard work and one must not be a burden on others for the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment.

The fifth and the last principal of the Mission is that one must not divulge to other the divine knowledge as revealed by the True Master without his permission.

With these principles at heart and God all around, a Nirankari devotee is a guiding star for the world by the practical life he lives. These principles enable the devotee to lead a simple and balanced life worthy of a human being. The Mission thus seeks to ensure individual development as well the welfare and progress of the society as a whole.

2. Ideology of Nirankari Mission

The ideology of the Sant Nirankari Mission takes its genesis from the fact that the world worships God without knowing Him in his real form, His real entity. That God exist and is the source of our being. The Supreme Creator, is acknowledged universally. Even those who do not believe in God, have no reason to deny His existence. An ordinary believer, however, fails to 'know' God

because God exists at a level of reality, which is beyond the five senses- sound, sight, smell, touch and taste. We live, act and move in God everywhere and all the time, but without realizing its existence within and outside. We go through every change or transformation in the world of ours bound by the dimensions of time and space but remain quite unconscious of the Supreme Force behind the same.

Satguru or the True Master here is believed as the true incarnation of the Formless in physical form as a human being. In this way, he has both the identities- formless as well as in physical form. As formless, he is ever- lasting and beyond the cycle of birth and death. In this way, he is one with God, both having one entity with all the powers or qualities of the Formless One. For its information or manifestation in physical form, its second entity, it may choose any human body, irrespective of age or gender, and function through the same to salvage the sinful world of human beings.

For the devotees of the Sant Nirankari Mission, the Nirankari Sant *Samagams* are an auspicious occasion to enjoy spiritual bliss. They are a powerful medium to take to the masses the Mission's message of truth, love and peace. They afford an opportunity to the devotees to see their *Satguru*, listen to the inspiring views of the Master and other preachers and feel blessed. *Samagams* offer a great opportunity for voluntary service not only for *Sewadal* but other devotees also. To the world, these *Samagams* present an ideal example of unity in diversity, equality and fraternity based on spiritual awakening, which helps the devotees to establish harmony at home when applied to their daily dealings.

A devotee is always keen to express his gratitude to the True Master who awards God- knowledge and thus salvages him from the darkness of ignorance. He would like to offer him the best of his possession- physical, mental and material. *Guru Puja Diwas* offers the devotees of the Sant Nirankari Mission an occasion for making the offerings to the True Master from their earning.

Manav Ekta Diwas or the Human Unity Day has been celebrated on April 24 every year since 1981. The date in this case has become sacred because it was on this day in 1980 that Baba Gurbachan Singh Ji laid down his life while crusading for the noble cause of truth, love, peace and human unity. Exceptions may, however, be made here also so that the date suits the convenience of devotees, particularly those living abroad. The Mission's followers recall the supreme

sacrifice of Baba Gurbachan Singh Ji and hundreds of other martyrs, and rededicate themselves to the noble cause they lived and died for.

The first death anniversary of Baba Hardev Singh Ji on May 13, 2017, was commemorated as *Samarpan Diwas*. Baba Ji relinquished his physical and merged into this eternal abode on this day in 2016. The day was marked by special congregations or *Samagams* all over India and abroad. Tributes were paid to Baba Ji for his glorious contribution towards the service to humanity. Every devotee of the Mission sought to dedicate himself or herself to take the Mission to those heights where Baba Hardev Singh Ji wanted to see it. They also pledged to work unitedly under the benign guidance of the present Spiritual Head, *Satguru Mata Savinder Hardev Ji Maharaj*.

The *Mukti Parv Samagam* is held on the 15th of August every year. While the country celebrates the Independence Day, the Mission adds to the spirit of jubilation by highlighting the need for man's spiritual liberation. It is of the opinion that just as political freedom from foreign rule is essential for socio-economic progress of the nation, spiritual liberation from the cycle of birth and death is necessary for lasting peace and real happiness.

3. Sant Nirankari Mandal

In order to institutionalize the organization and streamline the activities of the Mission, the then Spiritual Head of the Mission, Baba Avtar Singh Ji gave it an organizational outfit, Sant Nirankari Mandal. The Mandal was got registered with its Headquarters at Delhi in September 1948. Its aims and objects include to preach and propagate the concept of One Formless God (*Nirankar*) and promote peace, non-violence and Universal Brotherhood among the people all over the world by holding congregations and otherwise. It is also stated that Sant Nirankari Mission is a religious order which believes that God can be realized only with the grace of living *Satguru*. Further, it shall not associate itself with any political party.

The Mandal has the following organs :

1. General Body : It comprises all the *Pracharaks*, *Mukhis*, *Pramukhs*, Zonal Incharges, *Sewa Dal* office-bearers and such other members of the Mission as may be nominated by the *Satguru*. It meets at least once a year under the benign Chairmanship of the *Satguru*. The General Body reviews the

progress of the Mission and lays down Policy guidelines for its promotion further.

2. Working Committee,
3. Executive Committee and
4. Advisory Committees.

All properties, movable and immovable, belonging to and acquired by the Mandal from time to time vest in The Sant Nirankari Mandal. All donations, offerings, gifts etc. in cash or kind, constitute the funds and assets of the Mandal. These are utilized for activities and programs designed to achieve the aims and objects of the Mandal. Proper and true accounts of the income and expenditure in respect of the Mandal and its Branches are maintained at Delhi Headquarters under the overall supervision of the Executive Committee. The accounts of the Mandal are audited by the Chartered Accountants annually.

At present Sant Nirankari Mission has 3019 branches into 95 Zones in the country and 200 abroad. In a way, conventions are an essential part of any religious faith or spiritual movement. They lend practical expression to certain principles or aspects of their philosophy and tend to strengthen the faith of those who believe or follow them. Some conventions of Nirankari Mission Gursikh-Manifestation of *Satguru* the Sant Nirankari Mission believe in the Formless God (*Nirankari Brahm*) and the true Master in physical form of a human being (*Sakar Satguru*). *Satguru* is the manifestation of the formless in physical form.

Second Charan Sparsh While being blessed with God-knowledge, a devotee is told that God Nirankari exists in every object of the universe whether young or old. Every human being is, therefore, an image of God. He touches the feet of the other and greets him or her with *dhan nirankar*, which means 'Hail the Almighty'. The other devotee will also touch his feet and say 'Dhan Nirankar'.

Thirdly Charanamrit is the holy wash from holy feet. Devotees of the Mission wash the holy feet of *Satguru* and use the water as nectar (*Amrit*). It is a matter of deep faith in *Satguru* and the Formless One.

Fourthly *Dupatta* the white scarf has its own sanctity. It is a symbol of spiritual entity given by *Satguru*. Saints wear it when they

represent *Satguru*, particularly when they award *Brahm Gyan* (God-knowledge), preside over a congregation, pay a visit to a devotee's house or shop, etc., when they represent the Mission in approaches them for *Charanamrit*.

Fifth and last convection Bhog Like the followers of any other religion faith, the devotees in the Sant Nirankari Mission also would like to offer their first morsel of food to the Almighty. Since the Almighty is Formless, it is considered sufficient to offer the first morsel to a fellow- devotee who is a living image of the Formless One.

The the order to achive the aim of service to Humanity. The Sant Nirankari Mission has two arm viz. The Sant Nirankari Mandal and sant Nirankari charitable Foundation which are spearheading the drive throughout the Globe the organized volunteers of the mission in form of Nirankari Sewadal Supported by a sea of humanity in the form of devotees are ever ready to take up new challenge as well as undertake the regulare commitments of the mission

The Mission is leading organization in the field of voluntary blood donation in Indian and abroad. The mission is running 4 Hospital and 137 Dispensaries on charitable basis in India. His Holiness Baba Hardev Singh ji Maharaj Started the voluntary blood donation campaign in 1986 after Baba Grubachan Singh Maharaj ji's martyrdom as a tribute to him and individuals who sacrificed their lives to up hold ideals of truth. Baba ji spoke, Human blood should flow in the veins and not in drains"

Sant Nirankari Mission recognizes blood as a universal human lifeline all humans despite caste, colour, gender or creed, need it to survive. Blood donation camps are being organized throughout the year especially on the following occasions. 5046 Blood donation camps have held since 1986 and more than 86900 blood unites have been donated up 31st March 2017 after the conation. Nirankari Blood Donation has been recording in the Guineas Book of the world. Sant Nirankari Blood Bank has bee established in Mumbai. The mission is also coming up with Sant Nirankari Heath city (SNHC) a huge super specialty hospital in North Delhi, India to cater to the comprehensive wellness and health of the community.

Although from spiritual point of view the Mission is convinced that whatever one eats, drinks and wears is related to body and has

nothing to do with the soul, it does advise its followers to refrain from taking any kind of intoxicants since it considers the same as the root cause of social evils. At the same time the Mission stresses the need for austerity in the matter of marriages and other social functions. In order to encourage dowry-free marriages, the Mission has already started organizing mass marriage functions in a big way.

Sant Nirankari Mission has always been extending its support and co-operation in any type of calamity in the country and abroad. To fight COVID-19 pandemic, SNM has donated 5 crore Rupees to the Govt. of India and 2 crore to different state governments. The mission has offered the buildings of *Satsang Bhawans* to be used as quarantine Centres all over India. PPE kits also have been donated to the health workers across the country. Nirankari volunteers are providing food to the poor (almost one Lakh people daily) Dry ration is also being distributed to the people who are in need of it.

SNM is also following all the guidelines of the Government for exm. from the 13th March onwards daily or weekly congregation are suspended to maintain social distancing.

In the field of education. The mission operates many schools colleges and other educational institutions in various cities of India along with this vocational institutes for youth have been set-up for upskilling. Youth empowerment and women empowerment programs are also organized regularly.

The United Nation organize world environment Day every year on June 5. This year. The theme was 'pollution free Air'. On the this day, SNCF organized, an awareness campaign in 17 hill stations to conserve trees and promote cleanliness and protect environment and promote tree plantation.

In recognition of the leading role performed in the field of blood donation, the Indian Red cross Society honoured the Sant Nirankari Charitable Foundation (SNCF) for its excellence in blood donation and promotional efforts. In a function organized in the Raj Bhawan, Hyderabad, Shri E.S.L. Narasimhan ji, the Governor of Telangana handed over a Certificate of Honour to Shri Rakesh Pal ji.

'Oneness' to encompass the total societal existence of human race without. Differentiation of any kind. The voice of Oneness reverberates around and within all living and nonliving beings. Oneness is a wholesome word, which, in my humble opinion, cannot be further subdivided.

The one who has identified with God, imbibes purity, love and brotherhood, while the one who has not, nurses hatred and jealousy. God realization cleanses one of all evils. Ignorance of God is the cause of hatred and enmity. When ignorance is dispelled, such negative feelings are eliminated. God knowledge fosters love and brotherhood."

4. Impact of Nirankari Missions

As far as the impact of Nirankari Missions is concerned, it has been enumerated as follows :

1. Mission preaches merger of soul with God. It dispels the darkness.
2. Mission escorts the seekers straight to kingdom of God and establishes direct and constraint communion with the omnipresent God.
3. Mission provides a common form, where all human beings professing different religious faiths, cultures, and nationalities up divine Nectar (*Amrit*) and enjoy everlasting peace, bliss and salvation.
4. Though the respondents have different socio-economic background, but no discrimination is found here.
5. The respondents do believe in caste and creed system and they do not discriminate between rich and poor.
6. They help financially each other and always remain ready to help each other.
7. Respondents feel more peace and harmony in social network the maturing factors I found in my study are as follows: Sanskar (ritual), problem of ghost (free soul) and motivation of relative, social security and financial support, mental satisfaction, motivation by lady *jajman*, behaviour of Nirankari followers. For salvation realization inspiration of Nephew.
8. Some respondents told that they get self satisfaction and ultimate truth of human life.
9. One respondent told after joining the mission that he gave up all his vices such as drinking, smoking, hunting etc.
10. One respondent told after joining the mission his family quarrel has ended.

11. According to some respondents, they have got a right path of spirituality.
12. One respondent told that I got a sense of mental peace with the meditation.
13. One respondent told he felt the sense of casteism loosened, He told that he did not hesitate in sitting among the upper caste.
14. Some respondents told that mission brings together all people professing different religious faith, culture and make them live together as member of universal brotherhood.
15. One respondent told that there was no bar of caste and creed. He got the theory of social equality in the Nirankari Mission.
16. Followers believe that Mata ji is charismatic personality. But Mataji, is source of Charisma. Mata ji is the sakar roop of Nirankar which is the ultimate reality of the cosmos.
17. Most of followers told that *Satguru* Mata Sudiksha ji appeals to try to see her image in the faces of all the Nirankari persons. So every Nirankari person treats other Nirankari as Mata Sudiksha Ji. So she tries to give other Nirankari a lot of respect. Due to these practices society is shifting to equalitarian society.

5. Conclusion

It may be concluded that the Mission is successfully mitigating caste-based distance in India, which has been caste-based society for centuries. It is giving opportunities to the socially backward classes to perform their rituals and decreasing discrimination by paving the way for so called 'inferior and superior' classes of society to come together. Consequently, the society has started moving from a stratified one to a decentralized one. Giving stress on accepting the diversities in society and declining discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, gender and race is the important Impact of Mission. It has further provided a common spiritual platform to everyone, without converting his/her caste and religion.

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Book Review

Surabhi Mahajan, *COVID-19: Changing Social Fabric in India*, New Delhi : Nation Press, 2020.

S. K. Gupta, Panjab University, Chandigarh

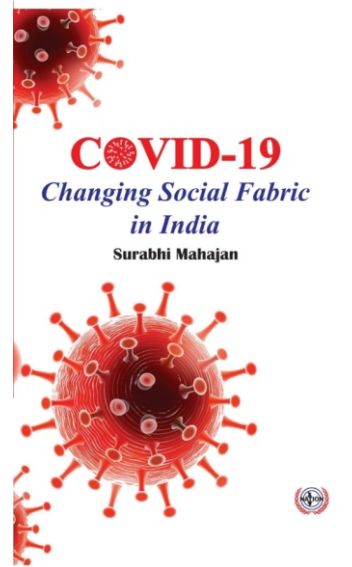
Surabhi Mahajan's book *COVID-19: Changing Social Fabric in India*, is written effulgently and is packed with statistical data in the form of tables. It is a great reading for all those concerned with COVID-19 globally and its impact on individuals, families and society at large in India during first three phases of lockdown in particular. This book is very well timed at this hour when the coronavirus has taken a death toll of more than 8 lakh globally with 2 crore plus positive cases (more than 50,000 deaths in India with 30 lakh plus positive cases) and there seems to be no end to this unforeseen pandemic in near future.

The cover illustration of structure of coronavirus is just as captivating as the book itself. The book has a preface and is divided into seven chapters. The foreword has been written by Prof. Sandeep Bains, Dean of College of Community Science, PAU, Ludhiana. Three chapters (4, 5 and 6) are devoted to presentation and analysis of data. Interestingly, as one glances through the references, one notices that most references are of online articles of 2020 understandably in accordance with the topic under study. With barely any book in the reference list, the references reveal the fact that for this pertinent issue, not much has been documented or written. This huge gap is what the book tries to fill.

The book under review attempts to investigate the impact of lockdown due to COVID-19 on various sections of Indian society at three different levels : individuals, families and society. Its importance increases manifold as it also attempts to suggest possible measures to cope with such pandemic in future. The responses of a sample of 750 from 19 states and union territories of India (Bihar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal) well illustrate the impact at these three levels.

The authoress categorically mentions that the lockdown has been a tough period, but the overall, majority of the respondents are

appreciative of the government's decision taken for the welfare of the country men amidst this pandemic, irrespective of their age, sex, profession, type and financial position of the family. She has concluded on the basis of empirical evidence that our life at individual level is not going to be the same as before the global spread of COVID-19. Social distancing, use of masks, sanitization and washing hands repeatedly are going to be part of our life in during journey by bus or train, morning and evening walk, shopping in market places and malls and going out for dinning in hotels and restaurants, joining marriage (wedding) or birthday



parties, any religious or political gathering and so on. This problem is going to be more severe when the authorities allow school/ colleges/universities to reopen shortly. Only time to come will validate as to how each and every one shall be able to learn this new way of life and customize themselves with new situation.

The study has revealed that overall the lockdown had more of a positive impact on families in terms of building sound relationship amongst each other and providing a moral support to handle the hard time of crisis. It gave a chance to the family members for not only staying together but also spending quality time with each other for better understanding. But, the negative implications especially for those families who were not able to earn two meals for themselves due to the lockdown or those families whose one or two members were struck anywhere else and so all were not together was painful and cannot be ignored. What one can do in this sensitive hour is to pray for one and all so that all families remain safe and comfortable to face global crisis spread due to COVID-19.

Her study has concluded that undoubtedly lockdown had a brighter side relating to self-realization and up-gradation of people, well-being of the community and healing of Mother Nature, new role of police and para- military forces, positive impact of increased use of technology as well as simple weddings without huge gatherings. However, the darker side also covers painful pictures of lower

sections striving for essential commodities, difficult & very painful exodus of migrant labourers to their homes in native states, loss of income and jobs for so many people due to the slowdown of economy, more problems like heated arguments, quarrels, divorce, depression etc. due to social isolation and an adverse effect on social relations due to social/physical distancing in the lockdown. Hence, it has to be ensured that a secondary epidemic of burnouts and stress-related diseases may not pop up in the end of latter half of 2020 or early 2021. The pandemic has left an indelible impression on many of us, making us to maintain cleanliness habits and follow good discipline in our life.

Every private or public library should have this book on its stacks for the simple reason that it provides an intensive narrative about the coronavirus, both at the global level as well as India, its impact at various level and the suggestions it renders to cope with such pandemic. The effectiveness of lockdown as a means to control the spread of coronavirus and the views of cross-section of society included in the book are also revealing and helpful for the authorities in the ongoing unlock periods. Not only this, Surabhi Mahajan comes up with some viable suggestions in last chapter to cope this as well as any other such pandemic in future. These suggestions are definitely going to prove very useful.

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